

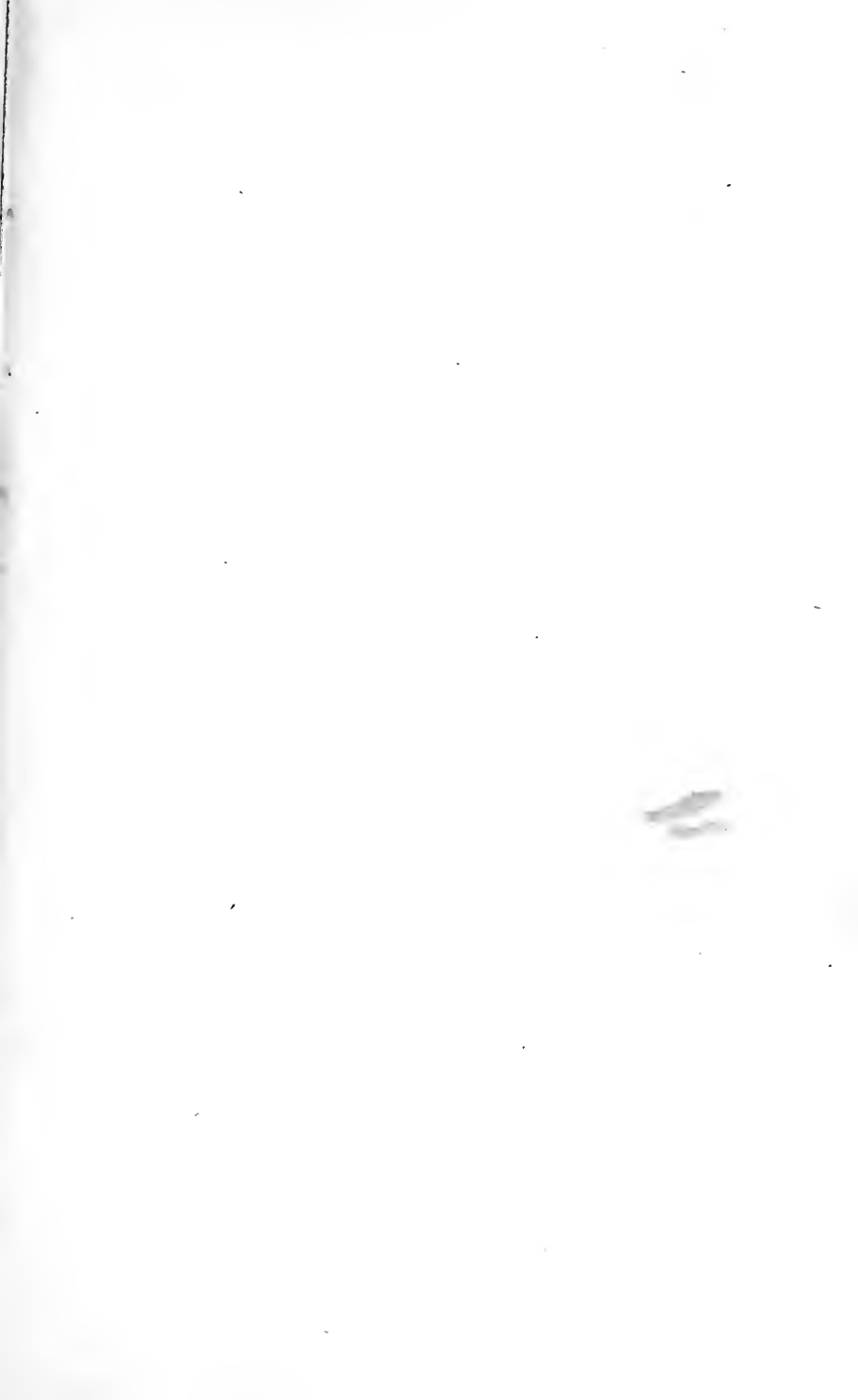




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THE

STAR - SEER :

A POEM.





# THE STAR-SEER :

A POEM,

In Five Cantos.

BY

WILLIAM DEARDEN.

"It is a gentle and affectionate thought,  
That in immeasurable heights above us,  
At our first birth this wreath of love was woven  
With sparkling stars for flowers."

SCHILLER.

LONDON :

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN ;  
AND LEYLAND & SON, HALIFAX.

M DCCC XXXVII.

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TO

FREDERICK WILLIAM CRONHELM, ESQ.

**This Poem,**

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND.

WILLIAM DEARDEN.

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## PROEM.



IN the beautiful and romantic valley where the scene of the following Poem is laid, a venerable relative of mine recently resided, full to o'erflowing with legendary lore respecting the valley and its inhabitants, in the olden time. From his lips, as we sat one fine summer's eve, a few weeks previous to his death, on a bench before his cottage, I heard the particulars of the traditionary story on which the Poem is founded.

By the majority of those who, being stern matter-of-fact personages, and exceedingly sceptical, not only of the utility, but of the verity, of all records that are in the slightest degree tinged .

with romance, unless proof-warranted by incontrovertible facts, the old man's narrative will, I fear, be esteemed one of those idle and incredible legends, which ought to be consigned to eternal oblivion.

There are others, however, it is hoped, from whose hearts, unwithered by the chilling breath of Utilitarian Philosophy, will be yielded a *poetical* faith in my aged relative's tale of other years. In the full assurance that such will be the case, I shall, without further preamble, give the hoary chronicler's account of the Star-Seer.

Two or three centuries ago, a castle stood on Oswald's rocky height, the owner of which was renowned far and near, for his skill in astrological science. Though the nature of his sublime studies tended to impress the minds of the vulgar with awe, his munificence, noble bearing, and uniform goodness of heart, won him the esteem and affection of every inhabitant of Caldene. <sup>(1)</sup> By the knowledge of his art, he had ascertained that a certain wonderful comet, <sup>(2)</sup> which was first observed in the hour of his birth, and continued to revisit our northern hemisphere periodically about every five years, was his Natal Planet, and that there was a lovely being, who was also subject to its influences, and whose destiny was mysteriously interwoven with his own. Her he resolved to find; and, assuming the garb of a palmer, he quitted his studies, and went in search of the beautiful unknown. Wandering in Kirklees woods,

on the evening when the comet commenced its fourth grand career through the heavens, he discovered at the entrance of a grotto, an enchanting creature, hailing with enthusiastic ardour, the glorious re-appearance of the splendid aerial voyager. With feelings of indescribable delight, he knelt by the fair worshipper, and in language the most impassioned, poured out the tenderness of his soul, and told her, that the planet which she had addressed as her Natal Star, presided over the destinies of both. In the heart of the beautiful enthusiast arose a devout belief that the words of a youth so engaging in manners and in mien, must be indisputably true; nor did she scruple, ere the termination of the first interview, to listen to the language of love, and breathe it sweetly in return. Frequent were their meetings beneath the boughs of Kirklees; and at each, the affection so romantically begun, grew stronger and stronger.

“But the bliss which they enjoyed did not last long. The voice of the sovereign summoned the youth of Britain to avenge the insults of the proud King of Spain, and to carry the thunder-bolt of war into the land of the insolent aggressor. To Harold of Oswald the appeal was imperative; he tore himself from love and his studies, and joined the ranks of the brave warriors who had rallied round the standard of loyalty and patriotism. What can surpass the affection of woman? What obstacles impede? What dangers intimidate? In the disguise of a soldier, Editha of Kirklees quitted

the abode of her ancestors, of which she was the lonely possessor, and followed her lover to the wars. By his side in the thickest of the battle she stood ; and when, oppressed by a multitude of foes, he sunk, as she thought, to rise no more, she protected him with her shield, till she was borne away in a state of insensibility from the body. On removing her helmet and cuirass, her sex was discovered ; and the British commander ordered her to be immediately taken on board a ship, which was about to sail for England, accompanied by a Spanish youth, named Francisco, who had been taken prisoner, and who, having heard her story, had requested and obtained permission to attend her as page. After encountering many perils, she landed on her native shore, and sought the hall of her ancestors. There, in solitude she mourned the fate of her beloved Harold ; but at length, the comet made its fifth appearance in the heavens ; and being desirous to ascertain, if possible, the precise spot in which the remains of her lover were deposited, she one evening, attended by her page, set out on a pilgrimage to Mount Oswald, where, she had been credibly informed, a noted Star-Seer who bore the name of Anselmo, had recently taken up his abode, in order that from him she might obtain the requisite information.

“On her arrival, she was surprised to hear the sounds of revelry and mirth ; and when ushered into the presence of the Star-Seer, who spoke to her from behind a magic curtain, she was informed, in answer to her request, that her lover was not dead, but that she



should that very night, not only see him, but be united to him in the bonds of wedlock. This, he assured her, was the will of fate. The sudden and unexpected information threw her into a swoon. On her recovery, she was conducted into a festal hall, where, in the person of the Star-Seer, she immediately recognised the youth whose death she had so long lamented.

“The nuptials were solemnized with great joy and splendour, though not unattended by strange signs and sounds in the heavens. While the comet sped serenely on its journey, the youthful pair spent their time in recounting the various vicissitudes that had befallen them during their long separation, and in contributing to the happiness of all around them ; but when, with dreadful aspect, the ominous planet began to sink behind the hills of the west, the Star-Seer learned by the fatal knowledge which he had acquired, that the doom of his loved one was sealed. By an irresistible power he was drawn, armed with a mysterious weapon, into the chamber where his wife was laid asleep ; and just when the comet disappeared from view, he fell in a state of insensibility upon the bed, nor knew, until he awoke to consciousness, that he had pierced her bosom with the fatal instrument of death, and that life was fled for ever !

“What became of him none could tell ; but on the night of the murder, a dreadful tempest arose, accompanied with violent convul-

sions of the earth, and Oswald Tower, with all it contained, fell from its rocky height into a yawning chasm, which immediately closed over the engulfed ruins ! ”

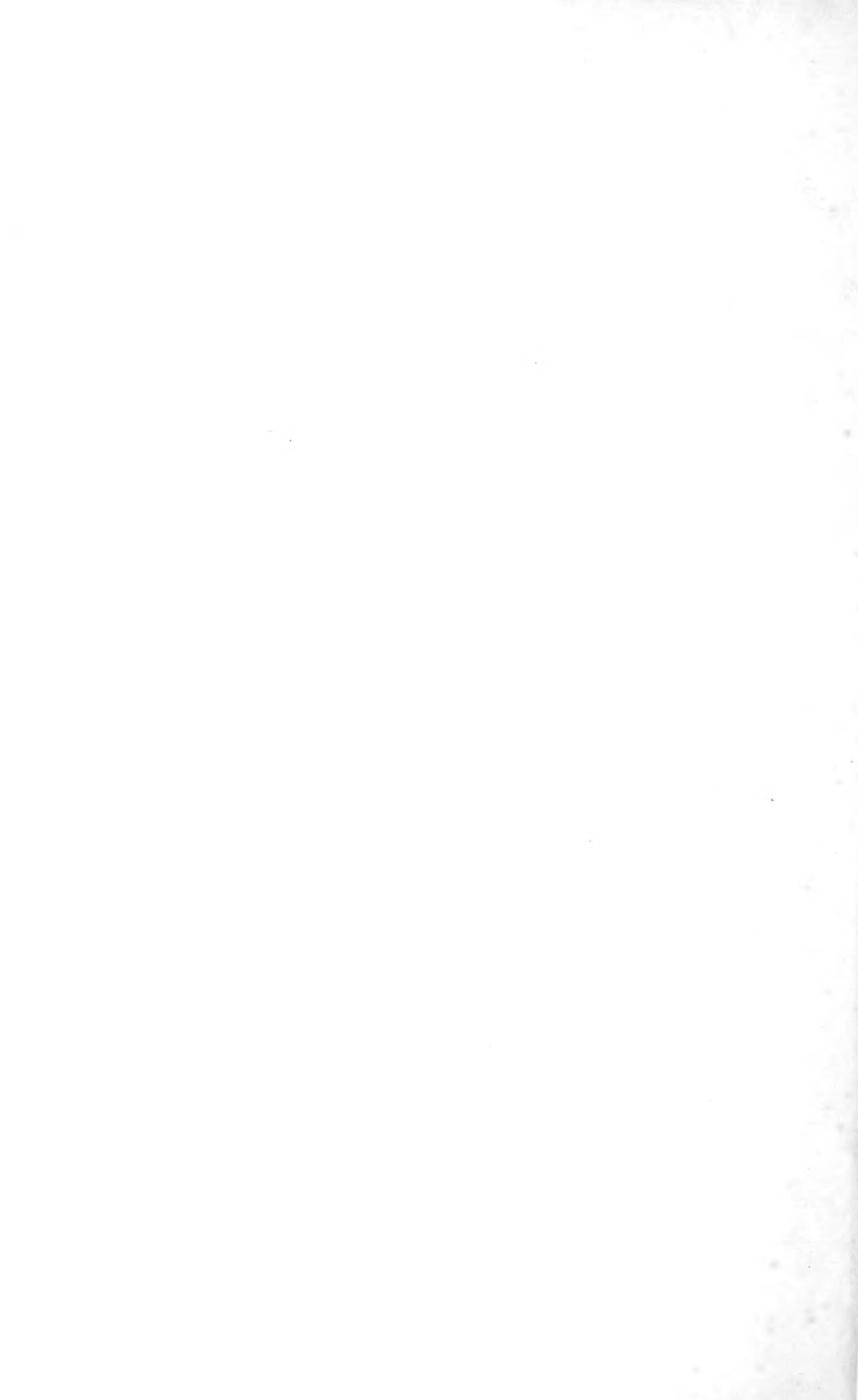
Such is the story from which I have collected the materials of my Poem. The use I have made of them will not, I trust, be considered beyond the license of poetry ; and it will be perceived that I have, in no respect, departed from the tenour of the old man’s narrative, except in a few instances where his silence left room for the imagination to expatiate.

Of the style of the poetry I presume not to speak ; but I hope it will not be esteemed pedantic in me to say that “the well of English undefiled,” as we find it in the days of a Spenser, a Dunbar, and a Carew, has long been the fountain whose waters I have relished the most ; and the abandonment of which by many modern sons of song “for broken cisterns that contain no water,” is deeply to be lamented. This predilection will account for the use of many words in the sense in which they were anciently employed,—words which, though still retained in our language, have, at the present day, either a totally different, or a more extensive signification. I will mention the word *ruth* as an instance : wherever it occurs, it will be seen that I have used it, like Spenser and Carew, to signify *sorrow* or *misery* ; a sense in which now it is rarely understood.

If, therefore, in the following Poem, a somewhat different strain of versification from that generally in vogue, and, occasionally, modes of expression not altogether consonant to present usage, are employed, the reader must impute their adoption to a feeling which I cannot overcome,—namely a love of the beauties and excellencies, as well as the virtues and wisdom, that adorned a better and a purer age.

W. DEARDEN.

Huddersfield, December 29th. 1836.



# THE STAR-SEER.

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CANTO FIRST.

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*The Ladye of Richeles.*



# THE STAR-SEER.



## CANTO FIRST.



### *The Lady of Kirkcree.*

~~~~~  
A lass unparalleled.

SHAKSPEARE.

~~~~~

#### I.

Who loves not night? when through the violet-hued,  
O'erarching heavens, the starry multitude,  
As through an opening curtain, smiling peep,  
Like radiant eyes awakened from sweet sleep,  
And gaze on earth, to holy quiet wooed  
With the merle's music, in far solitude  
Shrouded invisible, and the incense-boon  
Which, as in tribute to the young Queen Moon,

Slow sailing in her silvery, curved canoe  
O'er the hill-tops, upon a sea of blue,  
From rocky shelves, green nooks, with beauteous face  
Meekly upturned, the adoring flowery race  
Pour from their perfumed chalices, and win,  
For every dew-drop treasured up therein,  
The benison of her smile, whose light may make  
The crystal trembler to new beauty wake.

## II.

Who does not love the night ? that e'er has been  
A pilgrim in the valley of CALDENE,  
When the blue cope, with all its radiancy  
Of moon and stars, hung like a canopy  
Above the hills, which garlanded appeared  
With silver-tufted trees, like columns reared  
To prop some gorgeous temple's fretted roof ;  
And, as he sate beneath the boughs' green woof,  
Entranced with witchery of scene and sound,  
Deemed he were dwelling on enchanted ground.



## III.

Hie thither now, and make that mossy stone  
Beside those murmuring waters, thy meet throne  
For solemn contemplation.—List!—What wonder  
Thou tremblest with dread joy! The boom of thunder,  
Far-off, comes rumbling down the vale!—From whence? . . .  
From heaven or earth?—Above thee, in the intense  
Blue vault, the stars the stilly air impregn  
With hallowing glory, and night's half-veiled Queen  
Wends on her journey, 'mid the luminous crowd,  
Serenely beautiful, without a cloud.  
List! 'tis the voice of waters, in deep mood,  
Uttering a solemn song of gratitude  
To all the radiant watchers of the night,  
That on CALDENE diffuse their holy light.

## IV.

There bows a hoary bridge, that seems to spring  
From wild rose-stems which, intertwining, cling

With broad-leaved ivy, round its rugged form,  
And, as the fringe-work of some faëry charm,  
Hang 'neath the arch in beautiful festoons,  
Gemmed with white roses, that, like little moons,  
Shine o'er the surface of the amber deep,  
Where lies the trout in silver-lidded sleep.

## V.

Yonder appears, with thunder-dinted brow,  
Towering above all hills, the wild LLADS-LOWE,  
In terrible grandeur, like a stony god ;  
And the dark pines, in lowly homage, nod  
At his dread footstool, when his heathery hair  
The wind waves weirdly in the red moon's glare.

## VI.

But see'st thou aught around his blasted head ?  
A white cloud gathers . . . now hath overspread <sup>(3)</sup>  
His dark form, like a mantle . . . now its hue  
Changes to lurid !—What smote then thy view ?—

Down on thy knees ! this night the Cymbric God  
Descends in wrath, and waves his fiery rod  
From his neglected altar !—Whence that noise ?  
'Tis like an earthquake, waking with dread voice,  
And breaking the iron sinews of the hills !  
A stillness now succeeds, so dead, it chills  
The blood with its strange contrast ! Now, in twain  
The cloud disparts, and wild winds rush amain,  
Bending the trees with horrid groan, to earth,  
And scattering their torn branches, as in mirth !  
What dost thou now behold ? A sudden light,  
Like a far-fallen star, gleams in the night,  
On dark LLADS-LOWE ! What sacrifice is paid, (1)  
That the fierce anger of the God be staid ?  
Why veil thy brow ? why dost thou gasp for breath ?  
Doth yon red flame premonish thee of death ?

## VII.

Angels ! 'tis not the altar's kindling glare—  
'Tis some dark demon's eye, with withering stare,

O'erlooking the scathed head of yon wild rock,  
To smite with bale the shepherd, or the flock,  
The pilgrim, or the maid, it frowns upon.  
Tranced one, awake! awake! behold yon sun,  
In awful beauty, burning redly bright,  
For leagues on leagues, far scattering through the night,  
Like some ensanguined chariot-steed of war,  
His fiery foam o'er many a frightened star!

## VIII.

What is thine errand, Wanderer sublime?  
Art thou commissioned, on this land of crime  
The vial of woe and pestilence to pour? <sup>(5)</sup>  
Lo! at thy presence, this unwonted hour,  
The awe-struck hinds to yon rude fane repair,  
In hurrying crowds, to breathe to Heaven a prayer,  
That the dark threatenings which thy looks pourtray,  
May, unfulfilled, pass o'er the earth away.

But there are eyes that gaze on thee, this night,  
Through tears of rapturous sorrow. Long the light

Of thy surpassing splendour, in the skies,  
Hath been expected, with full pomp to rise!

## IX.

O, who is she, the beautiful One, that kneels  
Alone before that ivied shade, nor feels  
The cold chill of the night? . . . insensible  
To all save thee, as thou wert visible,  
To her keen ken, a vision fraught with love.  
O'erwatching her benignly from above.

## X.

Who that hath wandered, at the hour of eve,  
In KIRKLEES' darkling groves, to muse or grieve,  
Has not beheld—and hastened to withdraw,  
As some stray angel's loveliness he saw—  
The LADYE EDITHA, at vesper hour,  
Kneeling, as now, before that rustic bower,  
And heavenward looking, as she hoped that some  
Bright spirit thence, to glad her heart, would come!

## XI.

List to those ripe lips' warbled harmony!  
Sweet as the wind, o'er groves of spicery  
Blowing at eve, when burthened with the boon  
Of lute-notes, welcoming the rising moon.

“My Natal Star! O, why delayed so long  
Thy radiant journey through yon starry throng?  
Full fifty moons have waned, since last as now  
Thou shed'st a flood of glory on my brow,  
And sent, as if a seraph from thy sphere,  
A smiling youth to kneel beside me here,  
And worship thee. . . *his* natal planet too. . . .  
And waken love, till then I never knew—  
Love so ecstatic, ardent, and divine,  
Death cannot quench it, nor the grave confine.  
But why prate I of love, and still survive  
Him, my love's life, o'er whose dust haply thrive  
The rank weeds of a distant field of blood,  
Where he his country's bravest hero stood,

And fell—unweeting who, around his form  
Clung, to protect it, in the battle-storm?  
That fearful eve, thine orb, like some red shield,  
Glared from the west upon the fatal field;  
Then, as my HAROLD breathed his last, sunk down  
Behind the mountains, with terrific frown,  
And left me with the ruthless, who denied  
The boon I asked, to perish by his side!

“Wend on thy way!—My dream shall be fulfilled!  
This night, I’ll seek the MAGIAN’s castle, skilled  
In deep star-lore, that I his aid may crave  
To find my hapless lover’s distant grave;  
And, ere thy glory shall again depart,  
There meekly rest this weary, broken heart!  
Then my freed spirit, O sweet dream of bliss!  
Shall dwell all pure, eternally with his,  
And feast on love and happiness sublime,  
In the rich vales of thy resplendent clime!”

## XII.

Thus sings this lovely vision of the night;  
Then, while a moment, with a wild delight,  
Her eyes are sparkling turned, like moon-lit dew,  
To her loved star, she vanishes from view.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.



THE STAR-SEER.

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CANTO SECOND.

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*The Pilgrimage.*



# THE STAR-SEER.



## CANTO SECOND.



### The Pilgrimage.

~~~~~  
What have we here? a man or a fish?—Legged like a man!  
and his fins like arms!

SHAKSPEARE.

~~~~~

#### I.

“FRANCISCO!” the loitering Page drew near:  
“My Ladye!” he said, in a voice of fear;  
For he saw, in the shadōwy twilight dim,  
A small grey man, of aspect grim,  
Start forth from a rifted alder tree,  
As the royal Elf of the wood were he:—  
“Ride forward, and spere of yonder wight,  
If he ken the road that leads aright,

Through these lonely wilds, to OSWALD TOWER,  
Which we would gain ere the midnight hour;  
For there, if report but soothly tells,  
ANSELMO, the far-famed Star-Seer dwells.”  
FRANCISCO bowed; but his look pourtrayed  
That he felt in his heart right sore afraid  
To quit his Ladye, and hold a parle  
Alone with the uncouth elfin earle;  
And, though he dared not disobey,  
He reined not his steed the *nearest* way  
To greet the wight—but as ye, no doubt,  
In his case had done—a roundabout,  
And a rather tardy course he steered  
To the dexter hand:—the Elf appeared  
To wait his coming; for there he stood,  
In a strange, uncourteous attitude,  
With his kimbo arms on his gaunt thigh-bones,  
And his feet apart on two huge grey stones.  
“FRANCISCO, speed!” “I will! I will!”  
And so he would, but his barb stood still,  
As if he beheld a sight of dread;  
His ears projected from out his head,

Like the horns of a snail; his long black tail,  
That featly was wont to switch in the gale,  
Between his trembling haunches clung,  
And, 'neath the saddle-girth, bristling hung.  
"Jesu shield me!" FRANCISCO cried;  
For he saw the Elf, with a hasty stride,  
Advancing towards him—he closed his eyes—  
His brain whirled round—his energies  
Within him died—and his cold, damp brow  
Sunk, with a swoop, on the saddle-bow;  
As he had been struck by a foe abaft,  
That moment dern, with a mortal shaft!

## II.

The wight drew near: he was, in sooth,  
A caitiff of form the most uncouth.  
On his head a conical cap he wore,  
Of woollen woof, turned up before;  
'Neath which flashed fitfully eyes of grey,  
Like gleams of the sun, on a stormy day;

And, 'tween them, abruptly swelling, rose  
A horned, thin, irregular nose,  
Like a hill which overhangs the sea,  
In rugged and wild sublimity,  
In which the incessant dash of the waves,  
Had scooped two narrow and darkling caves.  
His scantily-bearded lower jaw  
Moved, like a pendulum, to and fro';  
Revealing a wall of ivory strong,  
That grinningly guarded a roofless tongue.  
His head, deprived of its woollen tower,  
Had been than his mountain-shoulders lower,  
Like a rock with withered heather crowned,  
Between two others that o'er it frowned.  
His long arm seemed from his back to spring  
Like the skeleton-bone of a dragon's wing;  
And his grey-clad form looked an iron mass,  
Raised on diminutive pillars of brass;  
For such, in their saffron hose and dight,  
His short legs seemed in the dun twilight,  
As they moved on feet, that, strange to tell,  
I ween, were the length of a Holland ell!

Perdie! so strange a wight was he,  
That whether for earth, or air, or sea,  
To creep, or walk, or fly, or swim,  
Dame Nature had first intended him,  
Ye could not ken:—for this, in vain,  
DAN WYATT might pose his learned brain,  
Though deeply skilled in her mystic laws,  
And reasoning from effect to cause.

## III.

Such was the figure that now stood near  
FRANCISCO's trembling steed of fear.  
He seized the reins, which the rider's hand,  
Relaxed and thewless, could not command;  
And stretching forth, like a bow unbent,  
His long, lank arm to its full extent,  
He raised the recreant Page on his seat,  
With a grasp so strong, that it made him griet  
Aloud, and open his eyes; and then—  
In sooth, he would have swooned again,

But that he dreaded the faitour Elf  
Would swallow, mayhap, both steed and self;  
For he wist that grinning mouth, at once,  
Was equal to such a chevisaunce.

## IV.

The little grey man began to lead  
Away the dumb rider and his steed.  
The Page now uttered a rueful cry,—  
Like a craven when doomed vile death to die.  
The caverned rocks, both far and near,  
Repeated the terrible sounds of fear,  
And the startled owls, as they prowled for prey,  
Flew, with a scream, o'er the woods away.

The little man gazed on the trembling Page,  
For a moment brief, with a look of rage;  
But suddenly he right winsome grew,  
And a volley of cachinnations flew  
From his ample mouth, which, quickly after,  
Awoke such peals of mountain-laughter,



That ye had sworn there had been a tavern  
Of elfin toppers in every cavern.  
FRANCISCO started, and o'er the neck  
Of the steed had gone,—had not a check  
From the strong-armed Elf, made him retreat,  
With fearful force, to his saddle-seat.

## V.

But the Ladye—how brooked she this delay?  
With angry impatience, I grieve to say:  
Yet quailed she not, when she heard that cry  
Of dread, and the echoes' deep reply?  
Did she not start, when the Elf gave birth,  
With his hoarse, loud laugh, to the mountain-mirth?  
In sooth, not she!—what! quail with fear!  
She had shielded the dead when the foeman's spear  
Grazed her white arm, ere it drunk the blood  
Of a yeoman's heart, that near her stood!  
On the floating wreck of the home-bound bark  
She had sate alone, when the riven dark

Vomited flames, and the raging storm  
The wild waves rolled around her form;  
And walked alone on the desolate shore,  
When the hiss of the snake, and the tiger's roar,  
Greeted her ears, at the close of day;  
And yet her soul in her bosom lay  
As undismayed, as in KIRKLEES' HALL,  
When guarded well with warriors tall:  
For she saw the Star of her Destiny,  
Shine in unsullied brilliancy,  
And nought of evil, she well divined,  
Could e'er betide her, while thus it shined.  
And now what was it her heart could move  
To dread of ill, with yon star above  
Still bright—ah, no! it is not bright,  
As it was wont to be, to-night.  
Some cloud, I ween, but o'er it swims,  
And its radiance for a moment dims.  
So thought the Ladye, and urged her steed  
Towards the spot from whence she heard proceed  
Those sudden sounds:—FRANCISCO heard  
The light hoof beat the ground—but a word

He dared not utter,—lest he should be  
Placed in more rueful jeopardy!  
Half round, he turned by stealth, his head,  
But kept one eye on the thing of dread,  
That speedily waddled along by his side;  
And, with the other, he soon espied,  
With a thrill of joy, his Ladye kind,  
On her snow-white barb, a few roods behind.  
His blood, which had forsook his frame,  
With strong and reflux current came.—  
A craven *he!*—*he* crouch to one,  
Whom he scorned in his soul to look upon!  
Saint George forefend!—"Foul caitiff, tell  
Where lies the road to the Wizard's cell?"  
The Elf looked up with a fierce grimace,  
And a sullen growl, in the Page's face;  
And then retreating a step or two,  
Meet spring to gain, like a bolt he flew,  
And mounted the fear-chilled Squire behind,  
Stiffly erect, as if the wind,  
O'er the northern hills that howling came,  
To a pillar of ice had changed his frame.

Him, with one arm, the Elf clasped round,  
And with the other the reins he found;  
And, spurring with all his might, the steed  
He soon urged on to its fleetest speed.  
The Page gave mouth to his fright and pain:  
But the little grey-man only laughed again.

## VI.

Away, and away, through forest dun,  
Through brake, o'er fell they hurry on;  
And the Ladye, undaunted, pursues their way—  
Her fate impelled, and she must obey!  
Ere long, through the opening boughs of the trees,  
A towering, dark grey rock she sees,  
Whose rugged top, with moss o'ergrown,  
In the mellow beams of the young moon shone:  
And she heard—but it did not her soul appal—  
The dash of waters, from fall to fall,  
And a fearful shriek, and a laugh so loud,  
That it seemed the burst of a thunder-cloud!

She neared the rock, but with watchful heed,  
For perilous now was her track indeed :  
Before her yawned, like the mouth of hell,  
A dread abyss, with the horrid yell  
Of tortured waters, whose misty shroud  
Mantled the bridge o'er the chasm bowed,  
Unbattlemented, and black with wet,  
So slippery too, that ye feared to set  
Your feet amiss; and so strait it was,  
That scarce two dogs abreast could pass.  
And, underneath, in the daylight wide,  
Had ye dared to look o'er the rugged side,  
Like horrid hair, ye might have seen  
Long pointed pendants of yew-like green,  
Constantly dripping, and to and fro',  
Waved by the wind, o'er the gulf below.

Where is the Ladye?—Her form is hid  
That ever-enduring vapour amid—  
Woe to the slip of her palfrey's hoof!  
Spirits of peril! O stand aloof!

Spirits of goodness! be ye her stay,  
And guide her safe o'er that fearful way!

'Tis done!—I see her now emerge  
From that shroud of mist, and briskly urge  
Her palfrey towards the gloomy mouth  
Of the frowning rock, whose overgrowth,  
In wild festoons dependent, still  
Shakes with the wreck of her Page's frill,  
Which a prickly briar tore off, in his flight  
Through the portal grim, with the elfin wight.  
She paused to list to their courser's tread,  
Then in at the entrance boldly sped.  
Her long white veil, in a lustrous stream,  
Floated behind in the soft moonbeam;  
But soon it was lost in the cavern's gloom—  
Heaven shield her from a deadly doom!

## VII.

Onwards she threads her darksome way  
Through mazes unillumed by day,

Where nought, save owlets' eyes are seen,  
Like fitful lamps of lucid green,  
Peering, in groups, from their high nest,  
Which human wight could ne'er molest,  
Without a guide her course to steer,  
Save sound of hoof, or cry of fear,  
Which, lessening on her track before,  
The echoes faintly backward bore ;  
Or, ever and anon, the cry  
Of bird of night that passed her by.

But suddenly a lurid gleam  
Appeared—it was a lone star's beam,  
Which through a yawning crevice shone :  
She paused to gaze—then hurried on,  
As though its look had been to her  
A sad, but sure, interpreter  
Of irremediable woe,  
It was her fatal doom to know !  
The night-breeze through the opening rocks  
Breathed blithe, and heaved her jetty locks,

And kissed her temples high and pale,  
And gently wantoned with her veil,  
Whose silver-broidered spangles far  
Outshone in brightness her lone star.

## VIII.

Lo ! now the end of the caverned way  
Burst on the view.—It might affray  
A craven heart, with the forms of stone  
On which the faint, cold moonbeams shone.  
And which on each side of the gateway stood,  
Like giants in couchant attitude,  
Supporting, with horrible looks of pain,  
And tears that streamed from their eyes in vain,  
The huge rock-roof, and its forest-crown  
Of ponderous oaks, whose roots crawled down,  
And, like foul snakes, from their ferny bed,  
Writhed round each stony gorgon's head.



## IX.

Yet the Ladye, unmindful of these, her barb  
Deftly urged on ; for the uppermost garb  
Of her doughty Page, she beheld between  
The breaks in the trees, by the moony sheen,  
As slowly his steed, by a perilous road,  
Strained up a high hill, with its double load.—  
LADYE OF KIRKLEES ! onward wend !  
Thy lonely Pilgrimage soon will end.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.



# THE STAR-SEER.

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CANTO THIRD.

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*The Aërial Voyage.*




# THE STAR-SEER.



## CANTO THIRD.



### *The Aerial Voyage.*



“ The high-born soul  
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing  
Beneath its native quarry.

AKENSIDE.



1.

THE setting sun in glory sate,  
Within his gorgeous crimson shrine,  
Pavilioned round with clouds of state,  
That stood to witness his decline.  
The roused hill-fox from his rock-hold  
Looked down upon the peasant's fold,

And whined impatiently to hear  
The trumpet of proud Chanticleer  
Proclaim to all his feathered brood,  
That lingered yet in field or wood,  
The wonted hour of roost was come,  
And warn them to their guarded home.  
Upon the rocks, the shaggy goat,  
With bowing head, and beard afloat,  
Stood, backward looking, all aghast  
To view his monstrous shadow cast  
Far o'er the heath, and answering him  
With motions wild, and aspect grim.  
The honey-bee, the heather-flower  
Bent murmuringly above the bower,  
Where good TOBIAS, father sage, <sup>(6)</sup>  
Wounded in secluded hermitage,  
When, as he sate before his door,  
Counting his weary beadroll o'er,  
And sighing that his mossy bin  
Lacked ampler store of wine within,  
The venerable man was hailed  
By one whose presence never failed

To be to him of right good cheer  
The ever-welcome harbinger,  
With joyful haste, he rose and said,  
While low he bowed his reverend head :—  
“ What would the LORD OF OSWALD TOWER  
With his poor beadsman at this hour ?—  
But first thy entrance let me crave,  
Within my humble, rocky cave,  
That I, to such an honoured guest,  
May tender of my fare the best.”

“ Father ! ” the youth cried smilingly,  
“ Brief tarriance must thou ask of me,  
Lest, while I lingering here abide,  
I win disfavour with my bride.”

“ Bride ! ” in amaze, the Friar exclaimed,  
As in the goblet upward flamed  
The liquor which, with prudent heed,  
He hoarded well till hour of need,  
“ Hast thou unworthily deemed my hand  
To tie the holy nuptial band ?—

That honour was conferred, I ween,  
On chaplain, stranger to CALDENE.  
Haply—to please thy Spouse alone,—  
On PETER, beadsman of CROSS-STONE, <sup>(7)</sup>  
Whose service thou, that joyful day,  
With largess rich didst well repay.”

“Beware! good clerk,” LORD OSWALD said,  
“Thy rash words draw not on thy head  
A ban more deadly than to be  
Deprived of sack, and marriage-fee!  
I trifle not: the task is thine  
To wed me—to reward thee, mine.  
At curfew, to yon tower repair,  
And for the solemn rite prepare!  
But marvel not, if thou should'st see  
The orb, that rose so frowningly  
Above the BALDER-STONE last even,  
This night look still more dread in heaven—  
My wand has power away to charm  
Its most appalling signs of harm.



“ On me and my beloved one,  
At our birth-hour, that star first shone ;  
And, after a fixed term of years,  
It now in splendour re-appears,  
On its fifth pilgrimage, to guide  
To OSWALD TOWER my destined bride,  
And that transporting moment gild  
When love’s fond vows shall be fulfilled.”

“ Pardon, my Lord, my erring haste,”  
The Friar rejoined, “ and deign to taste  
The humble beverage of my cell.”—  
The MAGIAN heard not ; for a spell  
Of troubled thought came o’er him then ;  
And towards the east, with steadfast ken,  
He wildly looked adown the glen,  
Above whose rocky verge afar,  
Struggled to view a ruddy star.  
He started ; and, with hurrying tread,  
Paced the green sward. At length he said,  
Unconscious any wight was near,  
To mark his mien, his words to hear :

“ Fair creature, who, in sable garb,  
Comest prancing on thy snowy barb,  
To crave a Sorcerer’s skill to find  
Where foes thy lover’s dust consigned,  
Ah ! little dost thou dream, that he . . .  
Who, had not fate forbid, to thee  
Had long ago on wings of love  
Flown, his unfaltering faith to prove,  
And from thy breast the grief dispelled,  
Which there for years hath rankling dwelled.  
The dreaded MAGIAN—will restore  
Him whom thou mournest as no more ;  
And when, in recompense for pain,  
Joy smiles around thy steps again,  
—Soul-withering thought !—his cursed hand  
Must lift the dark assassin’s brand  
To smite —— ”

He could no more, but fell  
Upon the ground insensible !  
The affrighted Father crossed his breast,  
And Aves numberless addressed

Most incoherently to Heaven,  
That, though the youth should die unshriven,  
His soul might find that balm of rest,  
Which seldom here his bosom blest.  
But suddenly, as from a trance,  
The MAGIAN rose, and with keen glance,  
Eyed well the Friar's varying mien ;  
From which, as from the stars, to glean  
Knowledge of thoughts that lay enshrined  
In deep recesses of his mind.

“PRIEST OF CALDENE!” at length he cried,  
“Declare thy quest, nor be denied.  
Right well I wis, thine ears have heard  
Full many a strange, mysterious word  
Escape me, in my reverie,  
Which—nay, conceal it not,—in thee  
Hath powerfully aroused desire  
Still more to know. . . . durst thou enquire.  
Be frank ! nor let thy face and cowl  
Disguise the cravings of thy soul.”

“Dread Seer!” the hoary man replied,  
“Since from thy ken ’twere vain to hide  
The yearning wish that in me dwells,  
To learn the source of all thy spells,  
By which not only power is thine  
To read the stars, but to divine,  
Despite the specious veils of art,  
The secrets of the human heart,  
I pray thee now, unfold to me  
That fearful, mighty mystery,  
Which has . . . whate’er its dower beside . . .  
The meed of peace to thee denied,  
That I may aid thee with my prayers,  
And, to assuage the rankling cares  
Within thy breast, this needed hour,  
The balm of consolation pour!”

“Truce to thy prate! for know, old man,  
The soothest prayer, or deadliest ban,  
Thy creed contains, will nought avail—  
I know my fate—list to my tale!”

The MAGIAN said ; then pausing brief,  
As if to quell the throb of grief,  
That moment sadd'ning memory woke,  
He thus the anxious silence broke :—

## II.

“ One silent even, as I to and fro’  
Paced the wild summit of the dread LLADS-LOWE,  
Panged with the rage of my unhallowed thirst,  
On heaven’s dark verge, I saw a sudden burst  
Of far-upshooting radiancy, and heard  
A rush, as from the wings of mighty bird,  
Startle the night ; and presently there came,  
O’er yon hill-top, a thing of dazzling flame,  
Which, as it nearer sailed, grew more defined . . .  
A luminous boat, careering on the wind,  
With starry wings ; and seated in it, One  
Whose visage was too bright to gaze upon !  
I fell upon my face, and hid mine eyes,  
That I might shun this vision of the skies ;

But e'en the rock, which trembled to its base,  
Became transpicuous as a crystal vase,  
In the sun's rays at noon. I started up ;  
And lo ! beside me, with a brilliant cup  
Of sparkling juice, the heavenly Voyager stood !  
And the bright boat lay tossing on a flood  
Of ambient clouds ; each pinion's glittering pride  
Folded at rest upon its silver side.—  
'Mortal !' he cried, 'if thy heart's daring be  
Proud as thy wish, drink ! drink ! and haste with me  
To yon infinitude, where lie unrolled  
The mystic truths, thy spirit would unfold.'  
I quaffed the cup, and instantly became  
Changed to a shape of bright, ethereal frame.  
The shining bark we entered ; and the wings,  
Proudly unfurled, flashed forth, like fan-spread springs,  
Sparkles of light, that, as we heavenward soared,  
Made the air seem beneath with spangles flooded !

“ Upward, and upward, swifter than the wind,  
We sped, and left the darkling earth behind,

And the wide sea of clouds ; 'mong which, far down,  
With blood-red eyes, and black, terrific frown,  
Lay coiled the Thunder-dragon ; from whose mouth,  
Bearded with shaggy flames, like overgrowth  
Of a huge cave on fire, at every breath,  
Gleamed fearfully, as through the gate of death,  
Barbed bolts of glowing ruin ; with which he  
Smites the prone earth, when, in the majesty  
Of his all-withering rage, he quits his lair,  
And howls, and tempests, in the troubled air !

“ Now, in dim dizziness of distance, rolled,  
Like a huge ball of ebony and gold,  
In the blue sea of space, Earth's ponderous globe,  
Half under veil of night, half with the robe  
Of the sun's brightness clad . . . alternate seen . . .  
Sailing amid ten thousand worlds ! the sheen  
Of their proud glories shining into nought  
The radiance which our bark around it wrought !  
I gazed, and gazed, till, maddening with the employ,  
Wild I leaped up, and my delirious joy

Strove to find utterance in a loud ' All Hail !'—  
Vain effort !—How could mortal voice avail  
Amid a universe of worlds ? Unheard,  
E'en by myself, died each ecstatic word !  
But it were vain to tell the mighty chime,  
Pealed from each orb, as on its path sublime  
Sped the bright wonder, meting laws to Time.

“ These soon, like specks, behind us feebly glowed,  
As still, with inconceivable swiftness, rode,  
Like a winged fiery hydra, scattering wide  
Innumerable sparkles from its scaly pride,  
On its wild track, the bright ærial bark ;  
Illumining far round the infinite dark ;  
Through which emerging, glided momentarily,  
Like huge wrecks drifting on a moonless sea,  
In sullen, silent majesty, the weird  
Ghosts of lost worlds, with glory once ensphered !  
And uncouth shapes, scared from the womb of night,  
Flitted about, with feeble glowworm light ;  
Then shrunk again within the horrid shroud  
Of that black dark's interminable cloud !



“ But now there came a sound, as of a car  
Rushing to battle ! and uprose afar,  
Wild, brilliant flames, and disappeared again,  
Like lightnings flickering o’er the midnight main.  
Louder, and louder waxed the din, and higher,  
More frequent, flashed those fitful gleams of fire !  
The face of darkness on a sudden grew  
Blood-red, then changed into a pallid hue,  
That rapidly became a deadlier pale,  
Like Fear’s wild visage blanched at Horror’s tale !

“ My radiant Guide arose ; and with his wings  
Furled o’er his breast, thrice hailed these heraldings  
Mysterious of the approaching dazzling wonder,  
And cried, with voice that startled me, like thunder  
Heard at deep midnight, in the tempest-war,  
‘ Mortal ! bow down ! behold thy Natal Star ! ’  
And, at that instant, burst upon my gaze  
A mighty orb, more splendent e’en than Day’s  
Proud God, when, in meridian glory, he  
Smiles on the altars of the rapt PARSEE !

“ On, in transcendent majesty, it came  
With pomp of sound ! A trail of lustrous flame  
Behind it, was immeasurably spread,  
Like the Fallen Angel’s gonfalon of dread,  
When, all abroad, with shout and trumpet-blare,  
Hell pales with its intolerable glare !

“ I knelt in speechless awe, and veiled my brow  
With my ethereal robe ; for painful now,  
E’en to my strengthened vision, grew the sight  
Of that vast orb’s intensity of light ;  
Towards which so rapidly we sped, the wings  
That wafted us, waxed all ablaze ! . . . flame-rings  
Of their consuming moultings, scattering o’er  
The giddy thing they fearfully upbore !

### III.

“ As one by lightning struck, I fell and lay  
Within the boat—how long ’twere vain to say—  
Unconscious what strange wonders might transpire ;  
At length, I felt an unction, as of fire,

Pass o'er my eye-lids :—I awoke, and found  
Myself within a temple, all around  
Radiant with living glory ! Spangled o'er  
With fervid constellations, shone the floor  
Of brightest azure. On the walls were hung  
Gold talismans, with words of unknown tongue  
Traced, as by dint of fire. Like diamond-mounts,  
Flashing out rayings from their flaming founts,  
Huge altars of transcendent brightness stood,  
With incense redolent, as of aloes-wood,  
Of cassia, bdellium, nard ; but more intense  
In fragrancy, o'erpowering human sense !  
The unpillared roof, in glory manifold,  
Shone like an outspread sea of liquid gold,  
Rolling its billowy sheen 'mid beautiful  
Islets of jasper, and of carbuncle !  
And sweetest music, as of cherubim,  
Chanting in harmony a gratulant hymn,  
Mixed with the tones of organ far away,  
And harps invisible, a magic sway  
Held o'er the listener's heart.—Ere long it ceased ;  
Then, presently, from out the flaming east,

A dark cloud, like a mighty dragon, sped,  
And, in a moment, with dread wings outspread,  
Muttering low peals of thunder, rose aloof,  
And swallowed up the brightness of the roof ;  
Then, downward tending, sucked the fiery breath  
From every altar, and the night of death  
Shed all around ! Sudden, a sword of fire  
Clave the thick gloom, which, as the thunder-choir  
Rolled its tremendous burthen through the fane,  
Shrunk, shuddering towards the opening east again,  
Revealing in mid space a form sublime,  
That looked of angels, and of gods, the prime !  
A wand of star-gemmed brilliancy he bore ;  
And at his step, the firmamental floor  
Fearfully trembled ! His wild, ebony hair,  
Instinct with fires of intermittent glare,  
Gathered around his brows, in one vast crowd ;  
As when, at night-fall, dusky cloud on cloud,  
Protuberant with thunder, holds embrace  
With the hoar mountain-top. His awful face  
Was like the broad full moon, when seen at even,  
Ruddily glaring on the verge of heaven ;

But, as he onward came, ray after ray  
Of that strange fieriness, was purged away,  
And all his countenance with lustre shone,  
Like night's fair Queen, upon her midnight throne.

## IV.

“ Prostrate before him reverently I fell ;  
A voice, like distant thunder, with the knell  
Of multitudinous echoes, near and far,  
Said, ‘ Rise ! I am the GENIUS OF THE STAR,  
That rules thy destiny. Haste ! follow me !  
That, since thou cravest it, I may guerdon thee  
With power to summon from the future, all  
Of weal or woe, that may thyself befall,  
And those o’er whom, frail denizens of earth,  
This Orb presided in the hour of birth.’

“ I rose and followed where the GENIUS led :  
Again, the invisible warblers sweetly shed  
Floods of divinest harmony around,  
Commingling with far instrumental sound ;

And, as we passed, from every altar came  
A richer perfume, and a brighter flame.

“ A door, emblazed with stars of jasper, rolled,  
Spontaneous, backward on its hinge of gold ;  
And far within, I saw a radiant throne,  
O’er which an arch, like earth’s bright sun-bow shone :  
The godlike Presence took his seat thereon,  
And waved his luminous wand to One in view,  
Knelt with furled wings, whose face, methought, I knew,  
But only as a face familiar seems,  
By oft recurring in our nightly dreams.

“ All on a sudden, round the GENIUS’ head,  
A dusky, pallid vapour ’gan to spread  
Its mantling folds ; which, like long robes unloosed,  
His form of brightness quickly circumfused.  
Then from the cloud-pavilion, which grew dread  
With ominous signs, a hollow voice thus said :  
‘ SCRIBE OF THE NORTHERN CYCLE ! haste ! unfold  
Thy mystic wonders in the HALL OF GOLD ! ’

Thrice bowed the spirit towards the trembling shrine,  
And, beckoning with his hand, began to incline  
His footsteps northward. A resistless sway  
Urged me to follow !—Sudden, like a lay,  
Poured by sad angels, at the funeral  
Of a lost soul, the unseen minstrels all  
Far off, in strains most melancholy, sung  
Dirge after dirge ; and a strange, gibbering tongue  
Behind me muttered whisperings of dread—  
But on and on, unheeding I sped.

## V.

“ At length we stood before a gate of pearl,  
Inwrought with gems ; upon it sate a Merle,  
That inward flew, with shrilly scream away,  
When oped the portal on the flood of day,  
That burst upon us from that proud hall’s roof,  
Like an o’ercanopying sun, when far aloof  
The pale-eyed planets from his presence fly.  
We entered ; and I saw above a high,  
Cloud-darkened, circular mirror, the wild bird

Hover with restless wings. An audible word  
Of mystic meaning, the plumed sibyl spake ;  
And, gradually, the mirror, like a lake,  
Purged from night-mists, and gleaming in the sun,  
Before my gaze, in cloudless brightness shone.  
‘ Watch ! Son of Earth, watch ! ’ cried the Merle, and flew  
Athwart the magic orb. In long review,  
Therein appeared the future’s chequered scene .  
Light-footed Joys, at intervals between  
Troops of weird Woes ! These airy wanderers  
The Scribe quick noted down, in characters  
Of earthly tongue, most legible. Nor did  
His ready hand e’er pause such toil amid,  
Save, ever and anon, a moment brief,  
To seal each luminous vellum’s storied leaf.

“ Again the Merle across the magic glass  
Flew, but on tremulous wing. Then I saw pass  
A vision of female Loveliness. . . so bright,  
I could not long, undazed, sustain the sight.  
A mournful smile played round her ruby lips ;  
And her pale brow, half under the eclipse



Of raven locks dishevelled, was not free  
From shadowy lines of sorrow's tracery.  
Night gathered round ; but, like a smile of love,  
A bright star gleamed upon her from above.  
She knelt in ecstasy ;—soon by her side  
Came a fond youth, and claimed her for his bride.  
They gazed upon the star ; then plighted hands :  
Embraced and parted.—To far distant lands  
The lover wandered.—Lo ! a battle-field,  
Whereon a bleeding warrior lies, with shield  
Of a fair stripling shaded ! From the corse  
That faithful One the cruel soldiers force,  
And bear away.—A brighter scene appears.—  
After a painful interval of years,  
The dead returns to life and love again !  
And now, with joyous pomp, the nuptial train  
Crowd the torch-lighted hall ;—the youthful pair  
In love's sweet bonds are fettered ; but an air  
Of troubled joy sits on them . . . far apart  
From that brief summer-cloudiness of heart,  
Which comes, most welcomingly, with shadowy boon,  
To cool the heat of Feeling's fervid noon.

“ The Merle, with panting struggle, o’er the face  
Of the strange mirror fluttered. Night apace  
Again drew on : again the worshipped star  
Appeared, but on the horizon’s verge afar,  
With glance of fiery red. The bride lay dreaming ;  
But o’er her bosom a keen knife hung gleaming  
In the star’s lurid sheen, whose orb hung now  
Half visible above a mountain’s brow.—  
It sank.—The giddy weapon, to and fro’  
Quivering like lightning, pierced that breast of snow !  
Thrice the winged sibyl wheeled around my head,  
And these dark words, in frantic wildness said :—

‘ Break, break O spell !—Come welcome cloud,  
And mantle the mirror within thy shroud.  
Seal, Writer, seal ! and do thou bestow  
On that Son of Earth thy record now.  
Enough, enough ! Is not for him  
Woe’s vial filled to the very brim ?  
Thirsts he for more ? Did he not read  
In that Star’s red glance of a fearful deed ?

And did not his right hand seem to feel  
The burning clench of the fatal steel,  
Which, wielded by One, with madness rife,  
The lovely Sleeper deprived of life ?

### THE DOOM.

‘ I burn ! I burn ! but ’tis mine to tell  
The terrible hest of the Oracle !  
The mortal who enters, with footstep bold,  
The innermost shrine of the HALL OF GOLD,  
Is doomed to the guerdon of woe or weal,  
The mystical mirror may then reveal !’

“ Thus spake the wondrous bird, ablaze all o’er,  
And fell to ashes on the spangled floor !  
A red flash shivered the dread orb amain,  
And down it fell, a shower of fiery rain !  
And hollow peal on peal of awful thunder  
Shook the vast hall !—Then opened wide asunder

The glittering pavement ; and I saw ascending  
A strange, wild form, of hideous aspect, bending,  
With hissing thong, fierce o'er a blood-red car,  
Drawn by huge beasts, whose eyes stood out afar  
From their unwieldy heads, like globes of fire !  
A sickness came upon me. . . to respire  
I tried, but could not : for the rider's breath  
Fell on me, with the chilliness of death,  
And down I sunk insensate.—

“ How, or when,  
From yon bright orb conveyed to earth again,  
'Twere vain to tell.—The raven's startling cry,  
Hovering above me, in the silent sky,  
First broke my trance : I woke : the wind-worn head  
Of hoar LLADS-LOWE was my ungenial bed ;  
And by my side a mystic tome was laid,  
Closely engirded with a golden braid,  
On which I read this fearful, strange behest,  
In words of magic character expressed :—

## THE CURSE.

' Break not each seal till the dawning of day !

The hand that rebelleth, shall wither away !

The eye shall be darkened, and madness prevail,

And worms eat the heart, ere the body shall fail ! ' "

## VI.

The MAGIAN ended, and looked round ;  
The holy Father on the ground  
Had sunk . . . but what the cause might be . . .  
Whether from that wild colloquy,  
Or from the potency of wine—  
It were irreverent to divine !  
But there, at his full length he lay  
Entranced—and loth am I to say,  
Because the best of men may slip—  
An empty goblet near his lip.  
“ Rise ! dreamer, rise ! the curfew-bell  
Sounds the day's requiem in the dell.

I must begone !” The SEER thus spoke,  
And shook the slumberer till he woke.  
“ Oh, am I still on blessed earth ?”  
The Friar exclaimed, with looks that mirth  
Unholy had with laughter viewed ;  
“ Or through the dark infinitude  
Of space, by demon-fury hurled,  
Fast onward to yon burning world ?”

“ Old man ! thy guardian angel still  
Attends thee in this land of ill.—  
But hark yon signal-sound !—I fear  
Remembrance of what brought me here,  
Thy dream ærial has effaced  
From thy bewildered mind—but haste !  
Array thee for my bridal !—Lo !  
A steed to bear thee waits below.”  
The MAGIAN said, and disappeared ;  
And soon the beadsman of CALDENE,  
With flowing robes, and well-trimmed beard,  
Upon a gallant barb was seen

Hast'ning to keep the appointed hour,  
Right merrily towards OSWALD TOWER.

## VII.

For whom in that torch-lighted hall is spread  
So gorgeous a feast, by those minions dread?  
That featly, like genie-slaves of old,  
Move to and fro', as with wand of gold,  
The hoary Seneschal doth direct,  
Seated high on a chair with purple decked.—  
For whom is there kindled the Housling Fire \*  
By the hallowing hand of that rosy Friar?  
And for whom doth that Minstrel, old and grey,  
Awake a preluding bridal-lay,  
As the numerous guests, at the door of the hall,  
Throng gaily attired for the festival?  
There lacketh the presence of bridegroom and bride,  
If wrongly our augury be not applied.

Fire anciently used in the sacrament of marriage.

But hark ! a voice from that tower above—  
“ Speed, RODOLPH, speed ! nigh the BEEMOND GROVE,  
Come strangers that may thy guidance lack—  
Conduct them here by the nearest track ! ”  
A savage form, that as warder stood,  
Sprung out at the gate, and was lost in the wood.

## VIII.

And who is he on that lone watch-tower,  
With his mystic lore, and his spells of power,  
Communing deep ? Why now doth he  
Direct, with such earnest scrutiny,  
His gaze to yon beautiful orb that shines,  
Like a radiant god, 'mid the silver shrines  
Of the congregated Sisters Seven,  
Those lilies of light on our northern heaven ?  
Hie thee to spere at yon hunter's shed,  
Ere he sinks to rest on his leafy bed ;  
Or hie of that raven-haired damsel to learn,  
Wending home from the well with her full water-urn ;—



In sooth, there are none that in ERRINGDEN dwell,  
That know not, that love not, the STAR-SEER well !  
For aye is he ready, with heart and hand,  
To offer to dolour a balsam bland ;  
And the gentle maid, in the hour of ruth,  
Half doubting her absent lover's truth,  
Has felt her heart cheered with the sunshine of hope,  
When the SEER, with a smile, drew her bright horoscope :  
And the gallant youth, ere he journeyed far,  
To quell the foe on the field of war,  
Hath paused to look back, and a blessing to pour  
On the kind-hearted dweller in OSWALD TOWER.  
And find me the Knight, from the heathy hills,  
Whence the CALDER evokes his thousand rills,  
To the wizard wood, 'neath whose weird oak-boughs,  
His darkling stream, in silence, flows,  
That would not for him who is reading to night  
The mystical signs of yon orb of light,  
Joyfully mount his battle-steed,  
And peril his life in the hour of need.

## IX.

Such is that lone One, whose spirit seems  
To have passed away to the land of dreams.  
He heedeth not e'en that cry of fear,  
Which wakes the rock-echoes, far and near ;  
Nor that hoarse, loud laugh, that with screams of woe,  
The raven answers from dark LLADS-LOWE.  
But white clouds sail, like midnight ships,  
O'er that glorious orb, and its light eclipse.  
Released for awhile from the trance of its spell,  
The SEER o'er his horoscope pondereth well ;  
And list ! now he speaks, as he turns his keen glance  
With rapturous awe, to yon starry expanse :

## X.

“ Sublime, illimitable hyaline !  
Eternal Sea ! in whose dark blue depths shine  
Myriads of brilliant isles, whose rayings bright,  
On earth's green bosom fall, like flowers of light.

A marvel I have deemed thee from a child ;  
And oft have gazed, with such delirium wild,  
On thy far cope, that thou hast seemed to me  
Like a vast banner, with emblazonry  
Intolerably splendent, to and fro'  
O'er the earth waving ! . . . now, would downward flow,  
Blinding the gazer's eye, with intense flushing  
Of luminous glory ! . . . now, would, with the rushing  
Of storm-winds o'er a forest, backward soar,  
Till all its splendours could be seen no more.  
Then down I've sunk, like thunder-rifted tree,  
Smit by the fearful vision's potency.

“ And ye, too,—what were ye, the Beautiful,  
That crowd you infinite ? Bright, visible  
Divinities, whom my young passionate soul  
Worshipped with zeal nought earthly could control.  
In the deep hush of midnight, on the hill,  
Lulled by the music of its own sweet rill,  
Or beetling rock, or where lone birds assemble,  
On difficult crags, I've felt the exquisite tremble

Of an ethereal joy within me wake  
Unutterable harmonies, and shake,  
In rich abundance, from my heart o'erfraught,  
Bright, beautiful pearl-drops of enraptured thought,  
As evanescent as a lover's dream,  
Or bubbles floating down a crystal stream,  
When, in empyreal glory, the charmed light  
Of your chaste loveliness, illumed the night,  
And o'er me rained, in one continuous shower,  
Ray-wreaths of magic, spiritual power.  
Then, in exuberant ecstasy, I've waved  
My nerved arm in the wind, and loudly craved  
The glorious boon of some rapt seraph's lyre,  
That I might wake, upon its strings of fire,  
To you a pæan, mighty as the flood  
Of my charmed spirit's glowing gratitude !

“ Thus, in the morn of youth, I loved, adored  
Your visible beauty. Ye were as a hoard  
Of precious gems, which I could call my own ;  
Or flowers innoxious, prodigally strown

On night's blue wild ; from which my fancy could,  
Whene'er it willed, extract ambrosial food.  
But manhood came, and with it came desire,  
Increasing hourly, till, like inward fire,  
It nigh consumed me, the wild truth to know,  
If but as tapers of immortal glow,  
Ye were ordained on yon far roof to burn,  
While Day was absent, plenishing his urn,  
Or placed some influence o'er mankind to yield,  
Mysterious bosses on the Almighty's shield !

“ I gained my wish—but, in that rueful hour,  
Cursed the dark knowledge of your fatal power.  
No longer now, ye seem unto mine eye,  
Fairies of light, but sibyls of the sky,  
In weal or woe, presiding o'er the birth,  
And mortal tenure, of each child of earth ;  
And weaving Destiny's mysterious woof  
For mighty empires' ruin, or behoof.

## XI.

“ O for sweet boyhood’s radiant dreams again !  
When with the Spirit of Night, in LEAVES’ deep glen,  
Mine converse held, as with congenial friend ;  
And godlike Fancy roamed from end to end  
Of the still, sleeping earth, and peopled it  
With beautiful creations infinite,  
Dwelling in bliss, and harmony, and love,  
O’erwatched by angels smiling from above.

“ My spirit saw not, in its vision fair,  
One lowering cloud of sorrow or of care,  
Whether I dreamt, o’er my ideal world  
Night’s deep blue banner was abroad unfurled,  
And, like a Vestal Virgin, from her fane  
The sweet Moon walked with all her starry train,  
To hallow every rose-decked home where wonned,  
Serenely blessed, the beautiful, the fond ;—  
Or, gorgeously appareled thou didst come,  
Proud King of Day, from thy imperial home,

With all thy pomp of clouds, and grateful earth  
Hailed thee with songs of melody and mirth,  
From every grove, from every joyous hill,  
Loud, eloquent stream, and gently warbling rill,  
The while, the perfume-breathing flowers around,  
Bending to list the choral breezes' sound,  
Appeared like lovely cup-bearers to stand,  
Holding a shining goblet in each hand,  
To woo thy taste, replete with silver dew,  
Which, when thy glowing orb arose to view,  
Was to as bright a ruby nectar turned  
As that which erst with Hebe's blushes burned,  
When, on bent knee, abashed with looks of love,  
Her radiant hand upheld the cup to Jove.—  
But now—weird thoughts, avaunt!—back to the hell  
Where I had chained you, ere ye broke the spell!  
Thou shadowy hand! withdraw that bloody knife!  
The hour is not yet come, when thou my Wife! . . .  
No! no! unlimb me, thunder! ere this arm  
Blight of her loveliness, a single charm!  
Hence horrid vision!—Mine is not the deed,  
Which felly made that beauteous bosom bleed.

My heart is not yet adamant—I'll war  
With destiny—Not thou my Natal Star,  
Fiery-eyed Wanderer ! . . . Fool I was to deem  
Thy influence aught but a distempered dream.—  
And what this register of future woe ? . . .  
E'en like thyself, a luminous lie !—Ah no !  
The past, too well, doth vouch the future's truth.—  
Albeit, my heart, abandon not to ruth  
The few brief hours allotted thee to prove,  
While yet thou mayst, the eecstatic bliss of love !  
This night my eager arms shall clasp a bride,  
Unparalleled in loveliness, the pride  
Of CALDER'S winding vales ! . . . One who hath stood,  
Clad as a warrior, on the field of blood,  
Close by my side, nor deemed I ever knew  
What love for me had prompted her to do ;  
Shielded my form, when by the foe I bled,  
Kissed my pale cheek, and mourned me as the dead !



## XII.

“ List ! list ! I hear the tramp of steeds, and lo !  
She comes ! . . . she comes upon her steed of snow !  
An angel through the night !—The echoing horn  
Of RODOLPH sounds !—The gate is backward borne !—  
She enters !—Whence this sudden, ruddy glare ?—  
Out ! out ! terrific Troubler of the air !  
I heed thee not ! The sparkling wine, to night,  
Shall far outshine thy dull purpureal light !”

He said ; and wildly wrapping round his frame  
His glittering robe, down from the watch-tower came,  
And entered silently a portal, whence  
Flashed forth a momentary light intense,  
Dazzling the view ; and perfumes breathed like those  
Young breezes waft from eglantine and rose.



THE STAR-SEER.

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CANTO FOURTH.

---

*The Bridal.*



# THE STAR-SEER.

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## CANTO FOURTH.

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### The Bridal.

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Oh! sooner shall the rose of May  
Mistake her own sweet nightingale,  
And to some meaner minstrel's lay  
Open her bosom's glowing veil,  
Than Love shall ever doubt a tone,  
A breath of the beloved one.

MOORE.

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#### I.

O WHAT resembles woman's love,  
In hour of danger or distress? . . .  
'Tis like a rainbow, with a dove  
Descending from its light, to bless!

And what can emblem faith in her,  
    When death the loved One takes away? . . .  
The lamp within the sepulchre,  
    That wanes not, till the walls decay.

Wealth's glittering meshes ne'er can bind  
    Her first fond love's unspotted wings :  
Though lone it's flight, yet unconfined,  
    In Memory's heaven it lives and sings.

The more her heart ye may assail,  
    The image there the brighter shines ;  
As tends the more the stormy gale.  
    To swell the flame of burning pines.

But who can match that lovely One,  
    Dismounting from her milk-white steed ?  
I'll gage my gauntlet, there is none  
    From southern AVON to the TWEED.

Affection's flame, in storm and strife,  
Hath known no change within her heart :  
It shone on him she loved, in life,  
Nor waned, when doomed from him to part.

And now she seeks the MAGIAN's tower,  
Directed by yon fiery Star,  
To crave his aid, by spells of power,  
To find her HAROLD's tomb afar.

And now the elfin warder grim  
Opes, at the wafture of her hand,  
The mystic chamber's portal dim,  
And then resumes his lonely stand.

She enters, with a step as light  
And silent as the falling dew :—  
Ah ! little dreams that Ladye bright,  
With whom she seeks sad interview !

## II.

Is this the GENIE's regal hall ? 'Tis meet  
For none, in sooth, but Beauty's hallowed feet  
To enter here. Rich crimson arras, dight  
With spell-words wrought in gold, glows in the light  
Of crystal lamps, invisibly suspended  
From the far sparkling roof, like crowds of splendid,  
Luminous birds, that, charm-bound, hover o'er,  
With moveless wings, the tessellated floor,  
Inhaling the sweet breath of flowers that grace  
The gilded top of many a sculptured vase.  
And there are mystic symbols, magic rings,  
On which, at intervals, crouch loathsome things,  
That croak, and hiss, and howl, yet seem to dwell  
Immovable captives of the dreaded spell  
Of him who sits on that star-spangled throne,  
In melancholy majesty alone.

Is he the GENIE-KING ? O, why so sad,  
Amid such splendours, where, save with the bad,



Joyance might reign for aye ?—Why now doth he  
Tremble, as if the o'erwhelming potency  
Of conscious guiltiness of heart and life,  
Awoke the thunders of internal strife ?  
Why turns he pale, as, with a fearful glance,  
He views that form of loveliness advance  
Silently towards him ? Wherefore doth he shroud  
His changeful look behind the mantling cloud  
Of that long magic curtain ? Is there aught  
In Beauty's presence, e'er with terror fraught ?

## III.

Is this an angel-visitant ? Her mien,  
Seems not of this dim earth. It is the queen  
Of some bright world, brought hither by the power  
Of mystic charm, at this peculiar hour.  
But why that sable robe ? O can there be,  
In the far clime, where the divinity  
Of such resplendent loveliness, must win  
Passionate worship, aught that breathes of sin ? . . .

Aught that partakes of sorrow or unrest,  
To scare the halcyon from that beauteous breast ?  
Whose frequent heavings, 'neath those folds of gauze,  
Seem as the gentle spirit lacked not cause  
Of some disquiet, though as yet unheard  
The delicate secret, in one whispered word : . . .  
Or can it be, in her bright land of birth,  
The links of love are frail as those on earth ?  
Or dwells fell malison of demons there,  
To blight the ecstatic bliss, it cannot share ?

But who would wish that peerless form arrayed  
In sprightlier garb ? Those sables seem meet shade  
To make each visible charm more brightly sparkle ;  
As the dun congregating clouds, that darkle  
In the blue neighbourhood of the Queen of night,  
Add to her loveliness a heavenlier light.

That sweet One kneels ; and her white, delicate hand  
Lifts tremblingly her spangled veil. How bland,  
How fair, how beautiful, and yet how sad,  
That face angelic ! where if grief e'er had

A light that far surpassed joy's radiant shrine,  
'Tis surely in that countenance divine !

She lifts her dark eye from its downward gaze ;  
And, while a faint smile on her features plays,  
These words, in liquid music, tremulous,  
And, like the rill's voice, sweetly querulous,  
When the young moon puts forth her silver lip  
To kiss the embowering lily-cups, and sip,  
From oak-leaves, meath the fairies make in drouth,  
Breathe from the pearly portal of her mouth :—

## IV.

**The Lady's Prayer.**

STAR-SEER, forgive the hapless maid,  
Who kneels before thy throne !  
Thou wilt not sure refuse thine aid  
To one so sad and lone.

My sire and brothers are no more ;

My mother died, ere I

A mother's loss could well deplore,

Or prize a boon so high. \*

But there was One who proved to me

Dearer than all I knew : . . .

Yon Star that rules my destiny,

Ruled my loved HAROLD's too.

In evil hour, he left his home ;

I followed in disguise :—

'Twas heaven to me with him to roam—

Unbound all other ties !

Oft, when he knew it not, I've heard

His dear lips breathe my name ;

And, Oh ! it was the last fond word

That with his life-blood came !

He died !—They tore me from his side,  
Despite my tears and cries !—  
O tell his own affianced bride,  
Where her true lover lies,—

That, ere yon harbinger of doom  
Shall cease on earth to glare,  
I may be laid in HAROLD'S tomb,  
And rest for ever there !

## V.

“ Ladye !” the STAR-SEER cried, “ thy HAROLD lives !  
This night shalt thou, if yonder mirror gives  
True indications see him by thee stand,  
And claim the guerdon of thy heart and hand ! ”  
He said no more ; but forth his curtained shade  
Rushed, and from falling saved the swooning maid.  
And bore her to a couch ; then, instantly  
Came at his summons, as in ministry  
'Neath his controlling spell, a shining crowd  
Of damsels, clad in bridal robes, and bowed

Their fair heads, like a rainbow wrought of flowers,  
With sweetest odours of reviving powers,  
And tender assiduities of love,  
The beautiful Insensible above.  
“ Maidens remember !” soft the MAGIAN said ;  
Then from the chamber silently he sped.

## VI.

Not long the Ladye lingered in her swoon ;  
But, as from out a silver cloud, the moon  
Comes with a brightness that seems holier made,  
By its brief durance 'neath the obscuring shade,  
In renovated loveliness she stood  
Amid the beautiful, of womanhood  
Transcendent queen ! A spiritual, heavenly light  
Beamed from her eyes, that shamed the lustre bright  
The crystal lamps diffused. Upon her cheeks  
Quick came and went, soft-glowing crimson streaks,  
Like shadows of the spirit of a rose,  
That longed, yet dared not, on those hills disclose

The rich effulgence of his wings, lest he  
Should taint their snow with his impurity.

## VII.

“Is this a dream?” she said in tremulous,  
Low, plaintive accents. “Follow! follow us!”  
The choir of damsels, with glad shout replied,  
“The Bridegroom chides the lingering of the Bride!”  
And, instantly, one of the fairy band  
Took the scarce-breathing Ladye by the hand,  
And gently led her from that room away  
On to a rich boudoir, where shone array  
Meeter than that she wore for bridal gay;  
The rest, their white arms wreathed, with dance and song,  
Following her steps the corridor along.

## VIII.

Why roamest thou, Sky-spectre, 'mong the stars  
Like the red-sandaled, homicidal Mars

'Mid marble fanes—with blood all terrible ?  
Why through that proud hall's lofty oriel  
Show thy portentous countenance malign,  
To wither innocent mirth ? Within the shrine  
Of darkness womb thee, that, a little while  
Love's hallowed Star with happiness may smile  
On two fond hearts, whose brief award of bliss,  
E'en fiends would spare, on such a night as this !  
But there are eyes that heed thee not. . . . that see  
Charms in the wine-cup, greater than in thee ;  
And soft cheeks glow with kisses newly pressed,  
As brightly, as thou wert a well-known guest ;  
And the sweet minstrelsy of harp and lute,  
Is answered with blithe song, and nimble foot,  
As merrily as thou wert but a thing,  
Traced on yon oriel, redly glittering.

## IX.

Now rose and spake the hoary Seneschal :  
“ Let peace prevail through OSWALD'S festal hall !



The Bride, the beauteous Bride, with all her train  
Of damsels comes !—List to the choral strain !”  
He said ; and silence, as by magic spell,  
O’er all the assembly instantaneous fell.  
A western portal opened, and a bright  
Young troop, rose-garlanded, and robed in white,  
Advanced, by two and two, and strewed the way  
With flowers, by moonlight gathered, fresh and gay ;  
Then all around, from glittering chalices, flung  
Odorous incense, and thus sweetly sung :

## X.

**The Song of the Damsels.**

Enter ! enter ! lovely Bride !  
Of all Beauty’s flowers the pride !  
Welcome ! welcome to our halls,  
As the voice of waterfalls,  
When by fragrant breezes borne,  
To our latticed bowers at morn ;

Or the ærial harmonies,  
Waking us to ecstasies,  
Floated down, in dreamy hour,  
When the LORD OF OSWALD'S TOWER,  
Weaves his spells, to charm our ears  
With the music of the spheres.

Hail ! the chosen Bride of one,  
Whom the bright eye of the sun  
Never saw surpassed, or even  
Rivalled, 'neath the cope of heaven—  
In true majesty of form ;  
Prowess in the battle-storm ;  
Nobleness in all that can  
Dignify the mind of man !

Hail ! we crown thee HAROLD'S BRIDE !

And the SEER ANSELMO'S too !—

Draw thy snowy veil aside—

Did'st thou e'er those features view ?

## XI.

Thus, as with glittering feet, around the Fair  
Sportively danced and sung, each lovely pair,  
She raised her veil ; then, in wild ecstasy,  
Forward she rushed, exclaiming “ It is he ! ”  
And sunk, as she bereft of life had been,  
Her raptured lover’s clasping arms within.

## XII.

Oh ! like that youth to press, if but one minute,  
Thy soul’s adored One thus . . . what bliss is in it !—  
In her quick, eloquent bosom-swells to *feel*  
The exquisite truth, no language can reveal . . .  
How sacredly enshrined thine image is  
Within that loveliest of Love’s sanctuaries !  
But Oh ! when, after long, long years apart,  
Thou fold’st again that dear maid to thy heart,  
Who, ever faithful to her virgin vow,  
Has fondly loved thee from the first as now ;

Who, for thy sake, has dangers braved, that would  
Have daunted breasts of boasted hardihood ;  
And now, with whom, in rapture's holiest hour,  
Thou tread'st the threshold of blest Hymen's bower—  
This, this, if such a boon to thee be given,  
Is earthly bliss that most resembles Heaven.

## XIII.

“ My EDITHA ! ” at length, the fond youth said,  
With passionate tenderness. Her drooping head  
The sweet One raised, and steadfastly awhile  
His features scanned ; then, with a rapt'rous smile,  
That, in its glowing eloquence, expressed  
Feelings unutterable, to his breast  
Closer she clung, as if to quit again  
A moment's space that refuge, would be pain.

## XIV.

Gaze on that rose of CALDER's vale ! a flower  
Fairer than that which bloomed in WOODSTOCK's bower,

By royal fondness cherished.—Even she,—  
Who, at some viewless naiad's minstrelsy,  
Rose from her crystal palace, mutely list'ning,  
Till her bright eyes, with tears ecstatic glist'ning,  
Close, in voluptuous weariness, to sleep,  
On the green margin of the murmuring deep,—  
Never, when first, beneath a LEYLAND's wand, <sup>18</sup>  
She woke to new, and beautiful being bland,  
And looked upon herself in sweet amaze,  
Veiling, with her ethereal hand, the gaze  
Of Day's enamoured god from her pure brow,  
Shone in such loveliness, as thou dost now,  
Bright, peerless EDITHA, *his* arms within,  
Whom thou adorest with so sweet a sin,  
That Heaven, if e'er idolatry could be  
Forgiven on earth, would pardon thine in thee!

## XV.

“Come, dearest maid,” the impatient lover cried,  
“Thou art not yet thy faithful HAROLD's BRIDE!

Lo ! yonder stands the white-robed, holy Friar,  
With open missal, and the Housling Fire,  
Ready our hearts and destinies to join,  
And make thee, sweet One, truly, wholly mine."

## XVI.

The beautiful ling'rer, with a sudden start,  
Gazed on him for a moment : " O, thou art,"  
Then smilingly she said, " My long-lost love !  
My HAROLD !—Yes !—I will my heart reprove  
For its brief, shadowy doubt !—Thou art not he,  
That wild STAR-SEER, that man of mystery !"

## XVII.

" Behold !" the youth replied, " before thy view,  
That man of mystery, and thine HAROLD too !  
In some calm hour, all this I will unfold.—  
Dost thou forget this casket of bright gold,  
In which thy beauteous image is enshrined,  
Given at our last sad parting, when the wind

IN KIRKLEES' Woods, as lingering we stood nigh  
Thy father's hall, remurmured sigh for sigh?"  
He said, and drew from out his silken vest,  
The glittering gem, and pressed it to his breast.  
"Enough!" she cried, "no longer I delay!  
Take to thy heart thy own fond EDITHA!"  
And, once more, like a passionate dove, she flew  
Into his arms, and to his bosom grew.

## XVIII.

Now gently onwards, through the glittering files  
Of choral damsels, who, with songs and smiles,  
Hailed the bright pair, the SEER, with lightsome tread,  
His blushing EDITHA to the altar led;  
Nor marked, save once. . . . and then with reckless eye. . . .  
That ominous Watcher, frowning from the sky!  
Whose fearful visage, every moment grew  
Like stiff'ning blood, a deeper, purpler hue!

## XIX.

The nuptial rites are o'er :—Whence came that sound ?  
From yon high vault, or from the trembling ground ?  
Hushed is the music—hushed the voice of mirth—  
Harps, and uplifted garlands, fall to earth.  
And many an eye, with stony gaze, is turned  
To the dark east, where late, unnoticed, burned  
The dread Sky-visitant, now in eclipse  
Of a dun, lurid cloud ; around whose lips,  
Like wreathing snakes, uproused to deadliest ire,  
The angry lightnings dart their stings of fire !

## XX.

“ On with the revel ! speed the dance and song !  
Drain the full cup !—What ! quail ye, that along  
Yon empyrean, in such hour as this,  
The thunder should proclaim the STAR-SEER's bliss ?  
And throw his nuptial torches, far and wide,  
To cheer the dark, in honour of his Bride ?”



Thus spake the MAGIAN—but he spake to stone—  
For, save his lovely EDITHA alone,  
Who, undismayed, beside him smiling stood,  
And deemed these signs were auguries of good,  
None heard!—Again, as if the hills of Heaven,  
Were, that dread moment, from their bases riven,  
And hurled, in terrible ruin, down night's steep  
Into the dark, unfathomable deep,  
The thunder pealed ; and, with a ghastlier glare,  
The white-forked flashes cleft the murky air !

## XXI.

Prone on the pavement, as if robbed of breath,  
And gasping in the agonies of death,  
Fell the awed crowds !. . . but two among them were  
Erect, unscathed ; as though the Thunderer  
Had them alone deemed worthy to enjoy  
A chartered bliss, while others reaped annoy.

“ Rise, dastard fools ! Lo ! at my wand of peace,  
This elemental revelry shall cease ! ”  
Thus the STAR-SEER, exulting, cried aloud,  
And waved his rod : the terror-darting cloud  
Disparted, and, like shreds of banner torn,  
The lurid fragments o’er the sky were borne,  
Leaving that Orb, its red wrath purged away,  
Smiling in heaven, with renovated ray.

## XXII.

On sped the dance, the revel, and the song ;  
The wine-cup sparkled, and the festal throng  
Again smiled gaily, as there ne’er had been  
A moment’s gloom, to cloud that joyous scene.

## XXIII.

Now from the nuptial hall, while choicest flowers  
Rained on the pathway, in abundant showers,

And gratulations, such as these were heard,  
With music rife, in every gladsome word,  
The STAR-SEER, through the crowding, long array  
Of anxious gazers, led his Bride away :—

### **Song of the Bridal Virgins.**

Farewell ! may the star of your destiny shine  
For ever upon you with aspect benign !  
And every bridal-day's happy return  
See the altar of love with more fervency burn !  
Our blessings be on you—haste, haste ye away !  
The moon has gone down, and each beautiful fay,  
That to honour your nuptials, danced long on the green,  
Went to rest, when the dew lacked the light of her sheen.

### XXIV.

Scarce had the damsels breathed this brief adieu,  
Ere, sweetly smiling, disappeared from view  
The blissful pair, like two bright angels, when  
They quit, for heaven, the ungenial bowers of men.

Far on into the morn, the guests prolonged  
The noisy hour of revelry, nor wronged  
The generous wine's exhilarating boon,  
Till foot, and voice, and harp, grew out of tune ;  
And, save the reverend Seneschal and Friar,  
Who drank no more than what good souls require  
To keep aloof the bane of worldly sorrow,  
And fit them for the duties of the morrow,  
Each wassailer sunk, forgetful of his home,  
Beneath the board, and dreamt of feasts to come :  
Then rose the pious fathers from their place,  
And, arm in arm, with slow and staggering pace,  
Quitted the hall, endeavouring, but in vain,  
To sing a strophe of some godly strain.

## XXV.

Harp, harp, not yet !—I may not break the seal  
Of that dread page's mysteries, and reveal,  
With sibylne tongue, audaciously, for whom  
Is darkly writ its register of doom !

Avaunt ! who, save some demon's soul accurst,  
Would wish the ruinous thunder-cloud to burst,  
And scar each leaf and intermingled flower,  
That blooms around Love's consecrated bower !

## XXVI.

O ! there are those to whom one brief hour's rife  
With more true bliss than is the longest life  
Spent in the dull cold round of worldly care !  
Though they may wander in a wild waste, where  
Oases bloom but few, the rill they drink,  
E'en on stern desolation's dreary brink,  
Sweeter becomes than liquor of the gods,  
By its rare coolness ; and the flower that nods  
O'er its delicious waters, is to them  
More precious far than e'en the costliest gem  
In regal circlet—richer perfume yields  
Than all the spices of Sabæan fields—  
Its beauty hallowed by its loneliness—  
The one bright star that gilds the wilderness.

Such, Lovers, is your lot. Would it were mine  
To bid each moment, like the present, shine  
With equal fervency of bliss !—Ye should  
Live on to hoary age ; and every good  
That Heaven vouchsafes to frail mortality,  
The dowry of your Faith and Love should be !  
But Oh ! yon Star !—who can its speed delay ?  
Enough ! enough !—be happy while ye may !

## XXVII.

Maids of CALDENE ! if thus far, my rude shell  
Hath made you willing captives of its spell,  
And, with a fervent wish, your bosoms yearn,  
The sadd'ning sequel of my lay to learn,  
I crave your gentle audience . . . high reward  
To grant, I ween, to unknown, bayless bard . . .  
While, as we sit amid the heather-bloom  
In OSWALD'S bower, my story I resume.

O may the Stars, that o'er your destinies  
Gently preside, perpetual harmonies  
Breathe round you : and, as on life's flowery track  
Ye smiling move, of Love's light never lack ;  
Nor darkling cloud a moment intervene  
Its holy brightness and your hearts between !

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO .





# THE STAR-SEER.

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CANTO FIFTH.

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**The Last Seal.**




# THE STAR-SEER.



## CANTO FIFTH.



### *The Last Seal.*



Look on me ! there is an order  
Of mortals on the earth, who do become  
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,  
Without the violence of warlike death.

BYRON.



### I.

On sped the hours of bliss : on sped the Star  
Rapidly towards its western bourn afar,  
Serenely splendent : and leaf after leaf,  
Of the dread Volume, oped each morn, of grief  
Spake not as yet : across the firmament  
Of Love's bright heaven, no warring winds had sent

Even the shadow of a cloud : the rill  
Of true felicity, in sunshine still,  
Undimmed by one dark drop of sadness, rolled  
With silvery lapse o'er sparkling sands of gold :  
And EDEN smiled more sweetly every hour,  
All rife with roses, round the Bridal-bower.

## II.

'Tis a calm summer's eve. O, who are they,  
In fragrant grot, beneath that turret grey,  
Lovingly seated, gazing on CALDENE,  
With all its rocks, woods, waters, in the sheen  
Of the full moon rejoicing ? Lend thine ear,  
As to his bride thus speaks the rapt STAR-SEER :—

“ There is a beauty in the sylvan vale,  
When sunset gilds the foliage ; and the gale,  
Like a pervading spirit, with a sigh,  
Salutes each flower and leaf it passes by ;—  
There is a spell-voice in the rippling rills,  
And the soft gush of song from shadowy hills,

Borne by the spirit of fragrance, to the bower  
Of the young muser, at the twilight hour ;—  
There is a grandeur, a sublimity,  
In the hoar mien of wild rock-majesty ;—  
A mellow charm o'er all the things of earth,  
When, momentarily, the bright stars start to birth  
On the blue heavens ; and, 'mong these shining crowds,  
The broad moon, struggling through the dusky clouds,  
Moves, like the beautiful spirit of love-dreams,  
O'er hallowed woods, and rocks, and glittering streams.

“ But now these charms are doubly sweet to me,  
Viewed here alone, my *ÉDITHA*, with thee,  
Who, as an angel, camest to smile away  
Thoughts that, too long, have made my breast their prey  
Thine eyes so full of love's own light, revealing  
The voiceless eloquence of ecstatic feeling,  
Within that home of beauty—”

“ I must chide,”

Thus interrupting him, the gentle Bride  
Says, with a mournful smile, “ the unwonted vein  
Of this thy strange, adulatory strain.—

I've had a dream, my HAROLD,—a dark dream,  
Which clouds my spirit's joy, and makes me seem—  
I know it does—what I ne'er wish to be—  
Unworthy of a love like thine for me."

## III.

"A dream! . . . dark dream!" with wild convulsive start,  
The STAR-SEER cries, and clasps her to his heart;  
"A dream! . . . dark dream!—Oh! saidst thou not of blood?  
Didst thou not name the shape accurst, that stood  
Grimly bent o'er thee, with a deadly knife  
Raised in his murd'rous hand, to take thy life?—  
The Star! . . . the Star! . . . "

Thus he, and scans the west  
Wildly, where, like a gorgeous ship at rest  
On the calm deep, the Planet lingers still,  
In wonted glory o'er yonder castled hill. <sup>(9)</sup>

## IV.

“ HAROLD ! my dream was not of blood !—Oh no !—  
Wherefore should'st thou imagine it was so ?  
Thou, too, hast had a vision. . . dark, I fear !—  
I saw no spectre, with dread weapon near,  
To rob me of my life. . . didst thou ?—Methought. . .  
Hush ! hush !—be calm !—death's darkness--that was nought !—  
I've dreamt it many a time, and wished it true,  
When thou wert lost to me—death's darkness grew  
Around me, and I passed from earth away—  
I rave ! . . . I rave ! . . . far distant be that day,  
When I shall cease round thy dear neck to twine,  
And tell thee. . . thus. . . how fondly I am thine !  
Turn then on me the radiance of thine eye ;  
Or I shall deem, yon bright Orb of the sky, -  
Envious of my felicity, has won  
That which I value most beneath the sun. . .  
The rich boon of thy love ! I cannot brook,  
A moment longer thine averted look !”

Thus, though forebodings of some ill unknown,  
Darken her soul, the Bride assumes a tone—  
An air of mirth, the wild thoughts to dispel,  
That bind her HAROLD in their trancing spell ;  
And, gently turning from the Star his gaze,  
Upon her breast his throbbing temples lays.

## V.

“ My more than angel ! ” rapturously he cries ;  
“ Each dark dream, hovering o’er my spirit flies,  
At the sweet fiat of thy lips away ;  
And my heart, kindled by the sunny ray  
Of thy bright love, with hope and gladness rife,  
Awakes to beautiful, renovated life !  
But O forgive me, if one painful word,  
In my soul’s ravings, thou this night hast heard !  
I would not wound thy bosom’s peace, to gain  
O’er yon resplendent world, eternal reign !  
Blest with thy presence, I all spells resign,  
Save those which thou around me dost intwine.”



## VI.

O, if there be, on earth, to mortals given  
An antepast of the pure bliss of Heaven,  
'Tis where two young, enamoured spirits pour  
Their feelings forth, in some lone, woodbine bower !  
The moon and stars, and softly-murmuring trees,  
Love's only conscious—welcome, witnesses !

## VII.

Thus, in bland interchange of fond, sweet words,  
Which, for such season, the rapt bosom hoards,  
And soft endearments, best bestowed, I ween,  
When Solitude sentinels Love's bower unseen,  
The youthful pair the swift hours wile away,  
Till the chill air forbids their longer stay.  
Then forth their rose-embowered retreat they come,  
And smiling enter OSWALD'S rock-built dome.

## VIII.

'Tis nigh the hour of midnight ; yet serene  
Yon Orb, in changeless majesty, is seen  
Hung o'er the hills ; and, save the warder, sate  
Still as a stone, above that western gate,  
And, with his wild head leaned upon his hand,  
Eyeing the Star, as 'twere his own he scanned,  
Each living inmate, in grey OSWALD'S TOWER,  
Is wrapped in slumber, at this peaceful hour.  
No sound is heard, save CALDER'S rapid flow,  
Borne upward, from the valley's depth below ;  
Or the lone owl, from tempest-rifted tree,  
Chiding the moon's unwelcome brilliancy.

## IX.

But, lo ! the Planet's train of glory now,  
Like a white pennon, sinks behind the brow  
Of yon far hill ! and deep-red tints absorb  
The recent silvery radiance of its orb !

## X.

Heard ye that fearful sound? There is no cloud  
O'er all the visible cope of heaven. The proud  
Oak-groves beneath, with all their foliage fair,  
Unruffled slumber in the breezeless air.  
'Twas like the ruin-dirge of some lost world,  
When from its orbit into chaos hurled !  
The stars shrink back ! the melancholy moon  
Droops in mid heaven, like maiden in a swoon !  
And the still air, which as a lake of light  
Lay in the vale, becomes, at the dread sight  
Of yon fierce, fiery globe, a sea of blood,  
Engulphing tower, and rock, and stream, and wood !

## XI.

The elfin warder, with a hoarse, wild yell,  
Quits his lone stance, and tolls the midnight bell :  
Then briefly gazing, with a look of woe,  
On the dread Orb, which now appears to glow

Like a red furnace, o'er yon hoar hill-top,  
And dashing from his sleepless eye the drop  
That trembled there, with his hard, withered hand,  
Hastens to take his melancholy stand  
By the dark portal of the MAGIAN's hall ;  
Whose loud—reverberated, deep foot-fall,  
He hears approaching. “ RODOLPH ! to the dome !  
Watch there ! ” a hollow voice cries in the gloom.  
The minion speeds with silent pace away,  
That brief, imperious mandate to obey.

## XII.

O, who is he, upon whose face of dread,  
Those waning lamps a light sepulchral shed ?  
Is he the Bridegroom who so lately sate,  
Love's willing captive, by his beauteous mate,  
In the lone arbour, pouring in her ear,  
The passionate breathings of a heart sincere ?  
Alas ! 'tis he ! but Oh ! how changed his mien !  
He seems like one, who has for ages been

Soul-stricken with a multitude of woes !  
Upon his hair, last eve so dark, the snows <sup>(10)</sup>  
Of eld have prematurely fallen ! His eyes  
So brilliant late—as to the westward skies,  
Where yon descending Star doth fiercely burn,  
Their awful glance so witheringly they turn,  
Drink from its orb such fieriness of hue,  
That fiends, appalled, would tremble at the view !

## XIV.

“ The hour is come—My Beautiful !—Asunder  
Cleave me, fell Planet, with thy burning thunder !  
And strew my ashes on the winds of heaven !—  
But save me from the deed !—This sorrow-riven,  
This bleeding heart, feels conscious thou art still  
Inflexible to prayer.—And I must kill—  
No ! no ! command me, 'neath night's ebon screen,  
To murder slumbering infants—fair CALDENE,  
And KIRKLEES' hallowed Sanctuary, where  
Rapt lips breathe orisons on the midnight air, <sup>(11)</sup>

Make desolate of beauty and of life,  
I'll do it, ere I'll plunge—whence came this knife  
Within my grasp?—Away, thou gory thing!  
I cannot throw thee from me!—thou dost sting  
This cursed hand still!—Then—thus—a speedy path  
Ope in my bosom, for thy fiery wrath!—  
Thou mock'st my purpose!—Ha!—I well divine,  
Thou art athirst for holier blood than mine!

“ I will abroad, and hide me in deep caves !  
O'erleap the precipice, or 'neath the waves  
Seek refuge from mine agony!—Off! Off!  
Foul fiends of hell!—ye shall not make me doff  
My soul of its humanity!—Avaunt!  
Ye shall not drag me thither!—'Tis the haunt  
Of innocence and beauty, where 'twere sin,  
For feet unholy e'er to enter in!”

## XV.

Thus raves the SEER, as, by some demon held,  
His staggering footsteps onwards are impelled

To the still chamber, where, in troubled rest,  
Like a sweet, slumbering dove in lonely nest,  
Lies his soul's worshipped idol. Wildly he  
Draws near the bridal couch, and frantically  
Presses her lips—she wakens not—a tear  
Falls from his eye upon her cheek—the clear,  
Round sparkling drop, a moment trembles there,  
Then rolls adown her neck, 'mong her dark hair,  
Like a lost pearl. He bares her bosom's snow,  
Which, 'gainst his hand, heaves like the gentle flow  
Of ocean, when some anchored bark it laves,  
The lulled winds dreaming in their coral caves.  
Back he recoils sense-wildered!—drops of sweat  
Roll from his temples, and his clenched knife wet,  
Studding it o'er, like dew.—That lamp grows pale;  
Flickers a moment; then expires—a trail  
Of light purpureal, from yon baneful sphere,  
Shoots through the lattice he is staggering near,  
And, like a bloody sword, its sharp point seems  
To pierce the breast, on which it redly gleams!  
But now that glare grows fainter—fainter still!—  
What dost thou see above yon western hill?

The Planet's ruddy brow ?—it disappears !  
—'Tis sure the hour of doom !—The blasted spheres  
Seem tumbling, with dread ruin, from their home !  
And o'er the hills strange, wild clouds, rushing, come,  
Which, meeting in mid heaven, the sick'ning moon  
Pall in thick gloom ! Around the castle croon  
The shudd'ring winds, like spirits lorn and drear !  
And earth, as if in travail with her fear,  
Audibly trembles ! Now, from out the dark,  
The lightning leaps, and, like a fiery shark,  
Swims o'er the welkin ! What dost thou behold ?  
—The Beautiful, in death's embraces cold !  
And One bent o'er her, like a blasted pine  
Smote by the thunder, when it doth recline  
A shattered ruin, o'er the once bright river,  
The mirror of its prime—whose founts for ever  
Are broken up, and its last waters wending  
Feebly along, and with the deep sea blending !

## XVI.

Stern destiny has triumphed !—Yes, that hand,  
Which bears upon it the appalling brand



Of dark, predestined, though unconscious guilt,  
Has the pure blood of innocency spilt !

“Awake ! my Love, awake ! the fiends stand nigh  
Thy lonely bed, and gibberingly they cry,  
Strike ! strike!--Thou dost not wake!--The loud-voiced thunder  
Breaks not the charm of thy still, stony slumber !—  
The deed is done !—Fell murderer, away !  
What dost thou near that lifeless form of clay !”

## XVII.

With these wild words, the frantic STAR-SEER quits  
The room of death, and climbs the tower, where sits  
Revealed in grim distinctness, by the sheen  
Of the quick-darting lightning, which with mien  
Unblenched he idly scans, the Warder lone,  
Beside a stony chest, by hands unknown  
Hewn from strange quarry, and all graven o'er  
With mystic words of cabalistic lore.

The MAGIAN waves his hand : the elf retires :  
Now, while above him, play the livid fires,  
And roars the hollow thunder, from its home  
Of adamant, the SEER the Fatal Tome  
Lifts high in air ; then, with his bloody blade,  
Severs the curse-denouncing, golden braid ;  
And thus, erect, with upturned gaze, he cries,  
While from the last leaf's awful mysteries  
He tears the final seal, " Dark fiends ! let fall  
Your utmost vengeance ! I will brave it all !"  
Dread sight ! from out the north, whose swarthy brow <sup>(12)</sup>  
Begins to show an ashy paleness now,  
Descends a flash, which, like an arm of fire,  
Launched from the riven clouds, with thunderings dire,  
Smites down the SEER, and, in his blasted hand,  
Consumes the Book of Fate ! As from a land  
Of everlasting winter, issue forth  
From the oped portal of the gleaming north,  
Cloud-charioted, and fast-careering on,  
Two shapes, on whom no summer ever shone !  
Their visages are thin, and ghastly pale ;  
Dim are their eyes, as ne'er to close, yet fail

Through infinite watching ; and their lips are sealed  
Close, as for ages they had not revealed  
Aught save a sigh !—though by each other sate,  
Each claims no brotherhood with his fellow mate ;  
No look exchanges, to betray the thought,  
With which his bosom seems intensely fraught.

They gain the tower : alight : and thence convey  
The thunder-scorched, yet living SEER away !  
His shrivelled arm, blood-branded, seen afar,  
Waving the murd'rous knife above the car,  
Which, towards the boreal clime from whence it came,  
Rapidly speeds, along a track of flame !

## XVIII.

Again the up-drawn curtain of the dark  
Falls o'er the pale-illuminated north ; and hark !  
Far down, among the rocks, a rueful cry  
Sounds in the dreary night, as from the eye  
Fades the sad scene ! With fiercer fury rife,  
After brief pause, the elemental strife

Rages anew ! An earthquake is abroad, <sup>(13)</sup>  
Like a strong steed, by ruin-fiend bestrode,  
Shaking the hills ! <sup>(14)</sup> LLADS-LOWE is rent in twain !  
And OSWALD'S TOWER falls thundering down amain  
From its torn base, into a gulf below ;  
Which, like some ravenous wild beast's hungry maw,  
Receives the ruin, and becomes the dread,  
Dark sepulchre of living and of dead !

The clouds, like warriors wearied with the fray,  
Luridly frowning, now ride slow away  
From the ærial battle-field, and leave  
The pale, emancipated moon to weave  
Her hallowing spells to soothe the lone CALDENE,  
Seated, in desolate beauty, like a queen  
Reft of her crown of glory ! Mourn for her,  
Winds of the night, and o'er the sepulchre  
Of her fallen greatness, sing a solemn dirge !  
But, o'er the being, cowering on the verge  
Of that impending rock-pile, breath the balm  
Of needed rest, his troubled breast to calm !

Ye dwellers in CALDENE ! whose homes have stood  
Screened from the midnight ruin, shall the good  
Ye bountifully reaped from OSWALD'S LORD,  
Incite your hearts no shelter to afford  
To his lorn, homeless servant, seated there  
In stony stillness, and in dumb despair ?

## XIX.

Day after day, upon his rocky stance,  
The gentle peasants viewed, with pitying glance,  
The lonely RODOLPH, withering in the wind !  
And many a youth, and lovely maiden kind,  
Oft went to lure him thence, and tempt his lip  
With food to eat, and cheering wine to sip.—  
'Twas vain !—He heeded not ;—but sate  
Most wildly still, sublimely desolate !  
Belief at length grew strong, that he was dead,  
Or turned to stone. The wind, from off his head,  
Blew its grey covering, and left it bare  
To the rude tempests ; and the fowls of air,

Oft lighted there, as on some quiet knoll ;  
And nightly, thence, the melancholy owl  
Sang, 'neath the faint light of the waning moon,  
Her requiem o'er the dead, with plaintive croon !  
His garments, piece-meal, from his body fell,  
And hung upon the trees ; yet, strange to tell !  
Though nought save fleshless bones appeared to sight,  
Through which the hinds oft saw the pale moonlight  
With trembling terror,—none could ever trace  
The ravage of decay upon his face ;  
And still his eye glared from its shaggy cave,  
In horrid fixure, on that rocky grave,  
Where lie entombed in everlasting sleep,  
Those for whose weal, that eye did vigils keep !

## XX.

Long time had passed, and yet the form was there ;  
But one still midnight, on the shuddering air,  
A fearful cry was heard ; and when the sun  
Rose on CALDENE, next morn, that form was gone !

The peasants sought, beneath the dreaded rock,  
To find the fallen remains—the blasted stock  
Of a reft oak, alone lay prostrate there,  
Stript, as by stroke of recent thunder, bare.  
They climbed the beetling cliff, above the one <sup>(15)</sup>  
Where the wild Watcher sate, but vestige none  
Of human reliques, could they there behold :  
Yet some declared they saw—but were not bold  
To venture down to certify the truth—  
A something glaring, like an eye of ruth,  
Amid white, smouldering ashes, which the breeze  
Each moment scattered on the adjacent trees.  
This might be fancy in crude minds begot :—  
Suffice : none dared approach the fatal spot ;  
From which was never heard, as erst, again,  
The merle's blithe song, or night-bird's doleful strain ;  
But whence, in hours of darkness, on the gale  
A shriek of woe was borne adown the dale ;  
And a strange spectral form, with withering eye,  
Rode on a headless steed along the sky ! <sup>(16)</sup>





## NOTES.

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PAGE X.

(1) CALDENE.

My friend, Mr. F. C. Spencer, speaking of Caldene, says, "Watson, in his history of Halifax, states that there was no contributory stream to the Calder of the name of Col, but in this he was certainly mistaken. Caldene, or Coldene, is the valley of the Col, or Cal. Whether it is this rivulet which furnishes the first syllable in the name of Calder, I do not presume to determine, inasmuch as the river is called Calder previous to receiving the waters of the Col, but one thing is plain, that the old tradition which Watson endeavoured to set aside was not without, at least, a plausible foundation."

Formerly, when none of those unseemly buildings were in existence which the sons of traffic have erected in but too many parts of this valley, and which are so lamentably incongruous with its fine scenery, CALDENE must have been one of the most beautiful spots in England. I am far from being an enemy to commerce ;

but I could wish its operations to be more exclusively confined to those parts of the country where, without desecrating the sanctuaries of nature, which ought ever, like the sabbath, to be kept holy, the necessary facilities for successfully carrying on those operations may be afforded. I grant, that, previous to the invention of the steam-engine, something like a plea may be admitted for the erection of factories in those localities where abundant falls of water were necessary for the working of machinery; but now, as the superiority of steam-power, both in speed and continuity of operation, is universally allowed, I cannot perceive the motive for still selecting the most beautiful situations in the country, as the site of cotton-mills and warehouses, and the abodes of a densely crowded manufacturing population.

All I contend for is this: that, provided equal, if not superior advantages would accrue to the manufacturer from the establishment of his various works in places better suited to their character, those lovely spots, which Nature's own hand has sanctified, might still remain as secluded temples where the Inspired might commune with her Spirit—as oases in the wilderness of toil, to which the poor artisan could retire to recruit his spirits, and invigorate his frame.

What should we say, if some commercial Goth were to purchase ground in the purlieu of York Minster, and erect a large mill, whose chimney should aspire to the height of the Great Tower, blackening with its smoke the walls of that sacred edifice, while the harsh din of the machinery mingled with the matin-song of thanksgiving, and the solemn voice of prayer? The temple of Commerce beside the temple of God!—Abhorred proximity! The mind shudders at the very idea. What would be the feeling, if, as an individual from a manufacturing town remarked to me, as he stood gazing upon the beautiful Cascade at Lowdore, “a company of enterprising merchants were to obtain possession of the Vale of Keswick, erect mills upon the banks of the lake, and make that roaring stream (meaning the cas-

eade) instead of roaming idly over the rocks, subservient to some useful purpose in manufacture?" Such desecration would well merit and receive the just indignation of mankind.

Caldene has not lost all its original beauty. On approaching it from Hebden Bridge, Rawtonstall Bank is seen swelling up before you, with its hanging woods, like a green rampart to oppose your farther progress, defended on the right by the picturesque rocks of Deil Scout, and on the left by those of Turret. A little in advance within the vale, and nearly opposite to the rocks last mentioned, the grey crags of Oswald, in wild magnificence, frown through the foliage of the trees, that seem to stand like so many sentinels in green, to guard the mountain from the devastation which the hand of man is making among some of his ancient compeers. The dark waters of the Calder, once majestic and musical in their flow, before they were held in vassalage to commerce,—now languid and feeble—fret impotently at his feet. It is not, however, this portion of the valley, that is the most interesting in scenery: the beauties and glories of Caldene are to be found to the north west. There the mountain called the Eaves, whose sloping side is covered with heather, furze, and pines, and whose brows are coronetted with rocks of the most singular and grotesque appearance, overlooks a dell, which I have never seen surpassed by any scene of the kind in either Cumberland or Wales. At the entrance to this beautiful spot, a tasteful little church has been recently erected, which, were it not for its contiguity to a Factory, whose windows, like staring eyes, peer above the trees that overshadow the sacred edifice, might almost vie in situation with the hallowed pile near Rydal Mount. Leaving this church on the right, you proceed by a winding path up a gentle acclivity, until you enter a narrow road which leads along a precipitous hill to the village of Lumb. At every step, the scene presented to the view increases in interest. Now you walk beneath an awning of green foliage, which the trees on each side of the road, like "brethren dwelling together in unity,"

form over your head, by the intermarriage of their boughs; while every leaf, trembling in the breeze, seems instinct with music. A sudden turn in the road brings you to the verge of a shelving precipice of several hundred feet in depth, down which if you venture to look, you will perceive tier below tier, of projecting rock, beautifully decorated by the hand of nature with almost every variety of wild flower and shrub.\* At the base of this declivity, the scanty waters of Caldene Clough, that have escaped thralldom, rave almost unseen along their rocky channel, save here and there, where they fall, with a sort of shelly sound, into a tiny moss-bordered lake, like an infant to sleep. Here the trees intermit their shade, and enable you to enjoy a sort of ichnographic view of the beautiful wooded glen beneath, and the wild sear on the opposite side of the clough, with its bright springs oozing from its side, and falling from green mossy islet to islet, in innumerable threads, like liquid silver. Before you a little hamlet, almost embosomed with trees, sleeps at the foot of the majestic Eaves; while the toppling crags of Deil Scout, far above you, threaten every moment to descend, and bury you in the abyss beneath. Proceeding a little farther, you come to a footpath on the right, which leads down to the Milking Bridge, that, with its narrow and ivied arch, spans the amber stream of the Col. Loiter not on the bridge—save only to take another glimpse of Deil Scout, which here appears most terrifically appalling and sublime—but advance about twenty or thirty yards along the left bank of the stream, until you come to a rock embedded in the water, and overhung by a solitary mountain ash. Seat yourself there; and then say, if nature ever presented to your view so enchanting, so sublime a picture. In the foreground, you have the hoary bridge, with all its wild festoonery, and behind

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\* In addition to the many attractions which Caldene, as well as the whole valley of Todmorden, offers to the eye of taste, the Botanist will find it by no means unworthy of attention. Many of the most rare of the Yorkshire plants will reward the researches of those who will take pains to examine the many mountain cloughs and rivulets with which the whole district abounds.

it, the romantic scar, before alluded to, "like Niobe all tears," having its summit crowned with a diadem of trees, that "wreath their old fantastic roots on high;" while far in the distance, \*Llads-Lowe Balder towers up in dark relief against the eastern sky.

Following the upward course of the stream, many other beautiful scenes present themselves to the eye of the lover of nature; but none of them equal the one I have just now faintly described.

The vale of the Hebden, too, is rich in picturesque and sublime scenery; particularly that portion of it, which is known by the name of Harcastle Crag. I must, however, forbear to enter into detail, and invite the reader of taste to explore the whole of this valley, and reap that reward which the contemplation of its beauties cannot fail to afford.

#### PAGE X.

### (2) A certain wonderful comet, &c.

"In the year 1541, August 21," says Herlicius Appian, "a comet appeared, tailed like a dragon; but its continuance in the heavens was but of short duration."

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\* "This," says Mr. Spencer, "is the name of a singular and magnificent rock in the vale of Caldene, near Hebden Bridge. The antiquary will at once perceive its British derivation and Druidical appropriation. The words signify 'The Slaughter Hill of Balder,'—this rock being, no doubt, the altar on which the Cymric sacrifices were performed."

## PAGE 6.

## (3) A white cloud gathers, &amp;c.

The idea of the cloud collecting round the head of Llad-Lowe, was suggested to me by the phenomenon of the Helm-wind, the effects of which I witnessed in the year 1831. This remarkable wind which occurs on Cross Fell, in Westmorland, is preceded by a beautifully variegated, light-coloured cloud, that totally envelopes the summit of the mountain, sometimes only for a few hours, and sometimes for several days together. During the continuance of the cloud, a noise is heard, like the distant roar of the sea, interrupting the solemn stillness which generally pervades the air. A long, black, irregular cloud, which the inhabitants of that part of the country call the Helm-bar, frequently stretches across the heavens, at the time the wind rushes from its pavilion, and is considered as the gloomy barrier of its boisterous fury. In the intervals between the blasts, which howl and sweep over the adjacent plains with a dreadful violence, a calm ensues, and the mountain-cloud seems strangely convulsed.

Similar phenomena, succeeded by similar effects, occur at the Cape of Good Hope, and in Natolia. St. Luke, in the 27th chapter of the Acts, is supposed to allude to the wind at the latter place, which he denominates Euroclydon.

## PAGE 7.

## (4) What sacrifice is paid, &amp;c.

Cæsar, speaking of the Gallic Druids, says, that it is their opinion, that for the life of a man, nothing but the life of a man can be rendered. And Cicero observes,

that if, at any time, induced by terror, they judge that the gods must be propitiated, they pollute their altars and temples. The druidic grove of the Massalian Gauls, is described by Lucan in terms almost too shocking to relate. For a detailed account of the practices of the Druids. *Vide* Bell's Geo. vol. 3, p. 121.

## PAGE 8.

## (5) The vial of woe and pestilence to pour.

The vulgar notion, which is far from being extinct, that comets are the precursors of pestilence and other calamities, was very strenuously advocated by the astrologers of the sixteenth century, as appears from Goad's *Astro-Meteorologica*. That writer quaintly remarks,—“ Those planets which we have demonstrated to be incendiaries, perturbors of heaven and earth, may, for that while at least, be suspected and presented for the disturbance of man, an inferior part of the universe.” *Vide* p. 472. Act 81.

In a work entitled “ The Fixed Stars, or an Analyzation and Refutation of Astrology,” there is the following account, extracted from the Taunton Courier of Nov. 14, 1811, of the effects produced by the appearance of a comet in 1712 :—

“ In the year 1712, Mr. Whiston having calculated the return of a comet, which was to make its appearance the 14th of October, at five minutes after five in the morning, gave notice to the public accordingly, with this terrifying addition—that a total dissolution of the world by fire was to take place on the Friday following. The reputation Mr. Whiston had long maintained both as a Divine and a Philosopher, left little or no doubt with the Populace of the truth of his prediction. Several ludicrous events now took place.

“ Numbers of persons in and about London, seized all the barges and boats on the Thames, very rationally concluding, that when the conflagration took place, there would be the most safety on the water.

“ A gentleman who had neglected family prayer for more than five years, informed his wife, that it was his determination to resume the laudable practice the same evening; but his wife, having a ball at her house, persuaded her husband to put it off, till they saw whether the Comet appeared or not.

“ The South Sea Stock immediately fell to five per cent. and the India to eleven; and the captain of a Dutch ship threw all his gunpowder into the river, that his vessel might not be endangered.

“ The next morning, however, the Comet appeared according to the prediction, and before noon the belief was universal that the Day of Judgment was at hand. About this time, two hundred and twenty-five clergymen were ferried over to Lambeth; it was said, to petition that a short prayer might be penned and ordered, there being none in the church service on that occasion.

“ Three maids of honour burnt their collections of plays and novels, and sent to a bookseller's to purchase each of them a Bible, and Bishop Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

“ The run upon the Bank was so great, that all hands were employed from morning till night in discounting notes and handing out specie. On Thursday, considerably more than seven thousand kept mistresses were legally married in the face of several congregations. And to crown the whole farce, Sir Gilbert Heathcoate, at that time head director of the Bank, issued orders to all the fire offices in London, requiring them to keep a good look-out, and a particular eye upon the Bank of England.”



## PAGE 34.

- (6) Where good TOBIAS, father sage,  
Wonned in secluded hermitage.

A little to the west of Llads-Lowe, is a rocky cavern, with every internal evidence of its having been, at some period, the residence of a human being. There is a tradition, that it was inhabited by an ancient monk, whose name was Tobias; and accordingly, the place is called Toby's cave to this day.

## PAGE 36.

- (7) On PETER, beadsman of CROSS-STONE.

Mr. Spencer, has favoured me with the following interesting remarks respecting Cross-Stone :—

“Cross-Stone is undoubtedly one of the places where Christianity was first preached in the Parish of Halifax. It is well known to Antiquaries that the earliest propagators of the gospel in this country were itinerants, and that the spots on which they were accustomed to celebrate the services of the new religion were distinguished by the holy symbol of the religion of Christ,—the Cross. Many of these interesting relics yet remain in our neighbourhood, amongst which is the base of the cross, from which Cross-Stone is derived. This interesting memorial is preserved in the garden of Stansfield Hall, in the immediate proximity of the chapel, and bears the name of the Abbot's Chair. But there is yet an older memorial of the ancient worship in this neighbourhood. In a field about a quarter of a mile from the rocks called the Bride-Stones, (an undoubted druidical remain in my

opinion,) has been found a very rude Stone Cross, of considerable dimensions, which I have no doubt was the *first* indication of the performance of Christian rites at this place, and confirms the general opinion of Ecclesiastical Antiquaries, that the scenes of Heathen worship were selected by the first apostles of Christianity as the most judicious spots for erecting the standard of the Gospel. By this means they enlisted the long derived and intense prejudices of the superstitious natives in favour of the place, and thus transferred to Christianity the influences which might have otherwise constituted so serious a barrier to its propagation."

## PAGE 65.

I gained my wish—but in that rueful hour,  
Cursed the dark knowledge of your fatal power.

"When, therefore," says an ancient astrologer, "God is pleased to call the Luminaries, and in them the rest also, by the name of Signs, he is far from denying his own ordinance, whereby he hath made them not signs and cyphers, but Authors and Causes of inferior mutations, giving them rule, Genesis 1, a signal Dominion over the earth: Dominion seeming to be a very old Egyptian word, from which Moses, in all probability, borrowed it."

Chaucer remarks:—

"For in the starrs, clearer than is the glass,  
Is written, God wot, whoso could it rede,  
The deathe of every man, withouten drede.  
In starrs many a winter there before  
Was writ the dethe of Hector, Achilles,  
Of Pompey, Julius, ere they were bore ;

The strife of Thebis and of Hercules.  
Of Sampson, Tumus, and of Socrates,  
The dethe ; but that men's witts ben so dull  
That no wight can well rede it at the full.'

A belief that the stars exercise an influence over the affairs of men, was formerly very prevalent in the valley of CALDENE. In the village of Hebden Bridge, there was a respectable man, who was reputed to have acquired such skill in astrology, that he had ascertained which of his children would prove successful in the world, and which would not, and regulated their education accordingly. One or two of his sons, whose natal star, it seems, was propitious, were brought up to the medical profession ; but the eldest, born under an adverse planet, was left almost destitute of the common rudiments of learning, and employed in the most servile occupations.

In connexion with this subject, it may not be improper to mention, that about twenty years ago, the people of this district were, in general, strenuous believers in Witchcraft ; and even at this very day, though such a belief may not be countenanced in the valleys, in consequence of the great influx of strangers, and the spread of information, it still lingers, like a cloud, upon the hills ; and innumerable are the stories told by the aged chroniclers of the mischiefs performed by those possessed of the Evil Eye and Spirit, and of the efficacy of the Witch Doctor's charms. From the number of tales of this description, which I have heard narrated, I will recite one to exercise the credulity of the reader.

On the hill south of Hebden Bridge, stands a little rural village, called Old Chamber—the original name of a house which Watson, in his history of Halifax, mentions as being the first in the neighbourhood, that had an apartment built above

the ground floor. The persons who resided in this very house, about eighteen years ago, felt convinced, from a variety of calamities that befel them, that they were under the baleful influence of Witchcraft. The first proof they had of this, was their being unable, for some time, to keep a cat either in the barn, or in the house; for no sooner did the animal become an inmate, than it sickened and died. Determined, if possible, to put a stop to this feline mortality, a charm was obtained from the Witch Doctor, and tied round the neck of a young Kitten, which, under such sovereign protection, became a healthy, thriving creature. In the meantime, however, the power of the Evil-disposed increased. Several cows, both in the field and in the stall, were suddenly seized with some unknown distemper, and died in the most excruciating agonies. A fine bull was attacked in the same way, and shared the same fate. At length, the favourite horse of the old farmer, on its return from the coal-pit, fell down on the threshold of the stable, and began to exhibit symptoms of the same terrible disorder. A messenger was immediately dispatched for the Witch Doctor, who came, and by the performance of some mysterious process, rescued the horse from death. Alarmed by these repeated misfortunes, the family enquired of the man of spells, if, by any power of his art, he could ascertain the person who malignancy was so signally manifested towards them. The Doctor told them he could not only discover, but bring the guilty being into their presence. He was requested to do so without delay. Accordingly he began his preparations: a fire was kindled in the middle of the barn-floor, and over it was suspended from a beam, a charmed phial, on which, he informed them, the life of the inflietor of their calamities, depended. Round the fire he then drew a circle, and placed within it such of the family as chose to witness the scene; and, after cautioning them not to mention the name of God, and setting the doors wide open, he commenced his incantations. The wind suddenly rose, and, in a short time, a withered old hag was seen hobbling down the barn-fold, with both hands on a stick, apparently in the most violent agitation. The good dame of the house no sooner saw her, than for-

getting the injunction of the Witch Doctor, she pronounced the interdicted word, in a fit of exasperation, and the hag was immediately released from the power of the spell, and scampered away as fast as she could to her lonely dwelling among the hills.

The particulars of this story I had from the lips of a person who was employed in the house at the time, and saw the approach, and precipitate departure, of the witch.

It is hoped none of my readers will infer from the preceding remarks and examples, that I am a believer in the absurdities of Astrology, or the legends of witchcraft. They are merely adduced to show that sufficient warranty in the notions of those who pretend to be skilled in astral influences, and in the power of charms, is afforded for the sentiments uttered by the character introduced in the poem.

Some time ago, happening to meet with a certain Star-reader, who was a most zealous advocate for his favourite science, and many of whose predictions, it was said, had been remarkably verified, I determined to devote my attention to Astrology, in order to ascertain either its truth or its fallacy. Accordingly, I read and studied all the works on the subject which I could procure; but I have not discovered any foundation upon which to establish a rational belief of its validity:—on the contrary, I am constrained to say with Pliny, it is “*fraudentissima artium* ;” and with St. Austin, who, at one period of his life, studied the art, and afterwards utterly renounced it as untenable and fallacious, it is “*magnus error, et magna dementia, superstitio*,” &c. The rules by which Astrologers profess to be guided, are altogether uncertain; nor has the profoundest of the *clique*, either of ancient or modern times, been able to supply a remedy; and I dare undertake to

prove,—even to the renowned Raphael, whose works I have perused,—that whatever prognostications he may make respecting any human being, state, or empire, the seasons, or the weather, the direct contrary to his predictions may be declared with equal authority, by the rules and principles of the science ;—that is to say, both that such a predicted event shall happen so, and that it shall not happen so. Here, then, we perceive the “glorious uncertainty of the laws,” by which the professors of this “divine art,” affect to be governed ! Indeed, the famous Jerome Cardan himself (lib. de Genti.) candidly confesses, that he approves of the remark of Marlianus : “*Si vis divinare, contrarium ad unguem dicito ejus quod Astrologi aut pollicentur, aut minitantur.*”

But it is said, the Astrologer builds the main fabric of his art upon experience. We all know that experience is founded upon trial, experiment, and comparison. Now, in order to give validity to the experience of the star-diviner, he must clearly demonstrate that the same position of the signs and planets invariably produces the same results. We must, therefore, see the situation of the heavens precisely the same in *two* instances at least, before astrological experience can be allowed to possess *one* confirmation. But can any one say, that the signs and planets have ever been *twice* in the same position ? No, never since the world was created ; nor is it probable they will be so, before the expiry of fifty thousand years ! The learned Gassendus, speaking in relation to the whole of the planetary system, and to the utter groundlessness of the Astrologer’s last subterfuge, *experience*, remarks that “*Each single precept or rule (of Astrology) ought to have been constituted upon many experiments had of the certain variety thereof ; whereas, we have plainly seen, that it was not possible for them (the Astrologers) ever to make the same experiment so much as only twice : because the same position of the heavens cannot return again, not only after many hundreds, but also many millions of years.*”

It is not my intention, here, to adduce all the arguments which may be advanced, to prove the absurd doctrines of Astrology. One or two, however, I submit to the reader's candid consideration.

In every Horoscope, or plan of nativity, that has been drawn for thousands of years back (with the exception of those Raphael and his satellites have introduced in the "Familiar Astrologer, &c. in which I find they have honoured the planet Herschel with a place among the siderial arbiters of destiny) there are only *seven* planets, including the sun and moon, exhibited. It is well known, that since the year 1780, astronomers have discovered several other planets; and who can say that we are acquainted with the whole? Now, it appears very strange, that influence should be attributed to the "mysterious seven," and not to those which have been recently discovered, with a proviso for those that have yet escaped the observation of astronomers. If, however, *all* of them exercise an influence, how can the Astrologer give true interpretations or predictions, without employing *all* in the casting of his genitures? It is an axiom in mathematics, that the whole is greater than a part: if in Star-science, this be allowed, it must follow, that the influence which a part of the planets possesses, must be inferior to that possessed by the whole. Therefore all the interpretations and prognostications of Astrologers, founded on such partial evidence, can never be relied on as certain; for, if it be true, as they would fain make the world believe, that conjunctions and oppositions are of the utmost importance in horoscopical divinations, it is quite evident, upon their own principles, that no geniture can be correct, without the recognition of the conjoined and opposite influences of the whole of the planetary sybils. Hence we must conclude, even admitting the truth of astrological principles, that there never has been a proper horoscope constructed from the days of Belshazzar, down to the era of the illustrious Raphael. For is it not manifest to the commonest understanding, that

while Venus and Jupiter might be in *conjunction*, the new planets, Piazzî, Olbers, Harding, &c. individually or collectively, might be in *opposition*, and entirely contravene the influence exercised by the former ?

Mr. W. Perkins, a learned divine, who wrote against Judicial Astrology, about two centuries ago, and who, to use his own words, "had long studied the art, and was never quiet until he had seen all the secrets of the same," exhibits the absurdity of astrological prognostications in so clear a light, that I cannot resist the desire of giving an extract from his work for the gratification of the reader.

"Now let us show the absurd folly of astrologers, in prognosticating of the state of the year, of which their predictions are either general for the whole year, or special for every day. In their general predictions are considered either the grounds of them, or the matters which they foretell. Their grounds are especially two. 1. The figure of the revolution of the year, erected when the sun entereth the first minute of Aries. 2. The figure celestial for the time of the eclipse of the sun and moon: for upon these twain, say they, dependeth the whole state of the year. In their celestial figures they consider the erecting of them, and the finding of the Lord of the figure. The erecting of the figure containeth very many absurdities.


"1. They follow that way which Regiomontanus did invent, and which was never as yet proved by any experience, and flatly differing from those ways which the ancient astrologers used: and were invented by Gazulus and Campanus. Nay, oftentimes it maketh a planet or a fixed star to signify a flat contrary thing to that which these two others do.



“ 2. The casting of the heavens into twelve parts, signifying twelve distinct kinds of matter, is ridiculous, because it being imagined, and void of stars, can have no force. Yet (some will say) other stars being in those places may have or signify such or such effects. I answer, that if stars of divers natures coming to such an house always signify some one kind of thing, then the house must of necessity give some force unto the planet; and so it shall have not only an augmenting, but also an effectually working power, which Astrologers deny, and no reason can prove.

“ 3. They make the twelfth and eleventh houses higher above the horizon than the first, to be of lesser force than it: and the fourth house to be of greater power than any above the horizon not cardinal; and the end of the ninth to be more in power than the beginning of the eleventh house; all which are against reason, because a planet the more perpendicular his beams are, the more his force. They answer, although the force of the light be greater, yet the secret influence is less, and the first house hath more forcible influence than the twelfth or eleventh. If the influence be secret, how can they know it? Again, they can by no experience shew that those houses have more influence than the rest: this influence maketh against them. I say they cannot prognosticate, because they know not one star's virtue. For whereas they say, that the sun and moon and planets have most force, I answer that it is by reason of their light, not their influence, which is small, and there is far greater in the smallest fixed stars. So that the fixed stars, although they have no light, or very small light perceived, yet have most influence. And so these men must needs dream, because they judge by wrong causes. Well, their figure being framed, and distinguished by fair characters, they go on to find the Lord of the figure, that is, that planet which has most dignities in the figure.

*The dignities of the  
planets are found  
out by these means  
especially.*

- 
1. Houses of the Planets.
  2. Exaltation.
  3. Triplicity.
  4. Terms.
  5. Stars.
  6. Houses.
  7. Freedom from combustion.
  8. Directions,
  9. Velocity of Course.
  10. Cazimi.
  11. Some aspects of other Planets.

“ These toys be so foolish, that a reasonable man would not vouchsafe to refute them ; yet a word or two. If the houses of the planets shall be battered and pulled down, all the rest of this worship and divinity will lie in the dust. Aries and Scorpio are appointed the houses of Mars ; Taurus and Libra, the houses of Venus ; Gemini and Virgo, the houses of Mercury ; Cancer, the house of the Moon ; Leo, the house of the Sun ; Sagittarius and Capricorn, the houses of Saturn. What reason do they give for all this ? Leo and Cancer, they say, are the houses of the Sun and Moon, because they resemble the nature of these planets, and because they come most near our heads : such reason they give of the rest. What feeble grounds are these ! As in the north part of the world, Cancer and Leo resemble the nature of the Sun ; so, in the south part, in the contrary climate, Capricorn and Aquarius do resemble their natures. Also, in every country some divers signs be either vertical, or else come near the top of the country : and so all signs shall be the houses of the Sun and Moon. Now then, the Sun being displaced, I cannot find how the rest of the planets can keep their hold.

“ To go further, the exaltations of Planets, in like manner are very dreams. They suppose *exaltations* to be those degrees in which the planets were at the

beginning of the world. But why should those places give more force than any other? And if they could give more force, yet they have falsely assigned them: for the Sun was not in Aries when it was created by God, but was placed in Libra; which I prove by this reason: God created man and beast in perfect age, giving unto them all kinds of fruit being then ripe, so that in the beginning was the time of the year which we call harvest. Now, because God never after changed the seasons, and we find that in the time of ripeness the Sun is always in Libra, we must needs also say that his place in the creation was in Libra. In the 23rd of Exodus, God commandeth that the feast of In-gathering should be celebrated in the end of the year, when the Israelites had gathered their fruits out of the fields. Wherefore, it must needs be that harvest was in the beginning of the year (the beginning and the ending being both together) and so by counting backwards, we shall find that the Sun was in Libra in the beginning of the world. To this agreeth *Josephus de antiquitate*, Lib. 1. cap. 3. *Rabbi Eleazar* upon *Genesis*; and *Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra*, upon the 7th of *Daniel*.

“The rest of the dignities of the planets consist of principles more weak than water. First, what is more unreasonable to a reasonable man than this, that swift motion should give unto a planet two dignities, and slow motion two debilities? It seemeth to be plain contrary. For a swift course hindereth the force of a planet, a slow course helpeth the same; and the stations of any planet make an effectual and sensible operation. A coal of fire in a man’s hand, if it be shaken about very much, it heateth very little; if it be shaken more slowly, it heateth more; but if it lie still, it burneth violently.

“*Combustion* is, in like sort, a feigned thing. What reason can Astrologers give, why it should give unto a star five debilities? They talk how that experience teaches them, that planets being under the beams of the Sun, do lose a great, (say

some) all their force. It is a manifest untruth. For Mercury being of the nature of that planet with which it is conjoined, if he go from conjunction with Saturn unto the Sun, he getteth no debilities thereby, but rather losing the feeble and unfortunate nature of Saturn, receiveth a more strong and fortunate nature of the Sun.

"A planet also being in *Caxini*, that is, being within sixteen minutes of the Sun's middle, hath thereby five dignities, which cannot well be, if that Combustion give five debilities. For the planet is in the middle of his Combustion, and the Sun casteth his beams and force very vehemently upon it. These Suns shew how absurd a dream Combustion is: yet if it were a good and sound principle of Astrology, and gave unto every planet five debilities, still it could not be proved, that liberty from combustion should give five dignities, being only a mere absence and privation of the other. A magnet at the presence of the adamant is hindered from drawing iron, yet if the adamant be taken away, the attractive virtue of the magnet is not increased. Here I might with ease confute the triplicities of planets, directions, aspects, applications, preventions, refrenations, with many such like: but my intent at this time has only been to shew some untruths of our Prognosticators."

Of the pernicious influence a belief in Astrology exercises over the mind, I will mention a striking instance in the conduct of a young man, with whom I was intimately acquainted. From a child, he was remarked for being very superstitious. The legends of witchcraft, necromancy, etc. with which his native place abounded, tended not a little to increase his mental infirmity. Early in youth, he became attached to a beautiful female, who, notwithstanding the opposition of an unfeeling parent, warmly returned his affection. With their years, and in proportion to the obstacles which they had to encounter, grew their fondness for each other, and the desire, so natural in those who truly love, of being together as much as possible. When opportunity favoured, therefore, they meet in secret, and poured out their

mutual vows of eternal fidelity, and cheered each other with the hope, that a day would yet come, when the indulgence of their affection would meet with the smile of parental approbation. Alas! that day never came! Their place of meeting was discovered through the treachery of a sister, and the stern fiat of a mother, more remarkable for the length of her prayers than the sanctity of her life, and the manifestation of the common gentlenesses of her sex, forbade their intercourse for ever! The feelings of the youth may be better conceived than described. He could not cease to love—too deeply had the sweet but fatal passion sunk into his heart, to be uprooted by the hand of unkindness, or gently obliterated by the assiduities of friendship. He shunned all society, and wandered about like one bewildered, the object of universal pity. If, in his solitary rambles, any of his companions chanced to meet him, they silently stepped aside to let him pass; nor did ever one unfeeling word escape them to wound that sorrow which, from its cause, they regarded as sacred.

One evening, when seated beneath a rock which had often been the Trysting-place of his fair one and himself, a person who pretended to great skill in astrology, came there to make, according to his own account, some observations of the planets. The old fortune-teller gazed upon the woe-begone countenance of the young solitary for some time without speaking; but at length told him, that he knew the cause of his grief, and, if he chose, would, for a trifling remuneration, draw his horoscope, and unfold his future destiny. The credulous youth immediately agreed to the proposal, in the hope that something might be revealed to indicate that the cloudiness of his heart would, ere long, pass away, and that he and his beloved should be united. His hope, however, like his love, was doomed to disappointment. He accompanied the Astrologer to his hut; his horoscope was soon constructed; and the pretended star-reader, after pondering a few minutes over the indications, informed the unhappy "native," that the object of his affections would soon die; but that

after her death, he should be united to one who, though much older than himself, should—the distracted youth stayed not to listen to the conclusion of the wizard's sentence, but throwing down the stipulated sum of money, rushed precipitately from the cottage.

The words of the fortune-teller preyed deeply upon my poor friend's mind. I endeavoured to convince him that what the old man had foretold respecting the death of the young lady, whose history and condition the imposter well knew, as did every one that resided within ten miles of her residence, might have been predicted by any other individual who was ignorant of astrology, with as probable a degree of certainty; and with regard to the other part of the prophecy, I assured him, the aspects of the stars no more indicated that he should marry a person older than himself (without his voluntary determination) than the fanciful figures, which he had often mentioned to me as having seen in the fire, indicated that he should be burnt to death, or buried alive.

My efforts were vain. He told me the hand of destiny was upon him, and he felt convinced the predictions of the Astrologer would be fulfilled; for he had had the same revealed to him in a dream. I forbore to say anything more upon the subject at that time, and shortly after, by the advice of friends, he removed to a situation at a considerable distance from home. There, change of scene, and the necessity of applying his mind to the proper discharge of the duties he had undertaken to fulfil, tended, for the time he was thus occupied, to abate the intensity of his sorrow; but, like the stricken deer, he carried the arrow in his side, which only pained him the more, when, after a temporary diversion of his thoughts, he was left alone to brood over the real and fancied evils of his destiny.

In the meanwhile, the object of his affections was observed to be fading rapidly away, like a sweet flower nipped by the untimely blast. The mother beheld the

work of decay, but, as there was no summer in her heart, she did not endeavour to arrest its progress by breathing the consolatory language of hope, and atoning for her unkindness by dissolving the cruel interdiction which was breaking her daughter's heart, and had made her lover wretched for ever. Nay, as if to add insult to cruelty, she encouraged a young man, who was fortunate enough to stand high in her estimation, to pay his addresses to the lovely sufferer, judging, I suppose, according to her own practice and experience, that one lover would suit quite as well as another, and, therefore, the substitution of a new one for the old, was all that was required to restore her daughter to health and cheerfulness. The gentle creature, though shocked at her mother's callousness of heart, uttered not one upbraiding word; she even received the young man's attentions with that degree of respect which they merited, but which he, very naturally, mistook for a more tender feeling; was seen walking with him in those very haunts, which she had frequented with her former lover; and those who saw them together there, began to indulge hard thoughts of her fidelity to him who was far away, and withdrew that pity which they had felt for her, while, as love's holy martyr, she endured the ordeal of a cruel persecution. Alas! they knew not why she acted thus. She felt that she had not long to live; and once more, before she quitted this world for ever, to revisit those beloved spots, no matter who might be her companion, to assist her fainting steps, would be, her bereaved heart told her, a consolation even in her last hour.

Soon did intelligence of her conduct reach the abode of my unhappy friend. At the first, he was inclined to think it a malicious attempt to insult his wretchedness by imposing on his credulity, but confirmation after confirmation from persons whom he could not suspect, left him no cause to doubt the truth of the report. In the bitterness of his heart, he breathed a curse upon her name; and was upon the point of committing self-destruction, to avoid the torture of hearing she was to be united to another, when a female, who was a visiter at the house in which he

resided, and who, for some time, had manifested a deep interest in his welfare, accidentally came into the room, and prevented the accomplishment of his rash design. Alarmed at the wildness of his mien, and the instrument of death she beheld on the table, she begged of him to reveal to her, as to a friend in whom he might safely confide, the cause of his unhappiness, that she might endeavour, if possible, to administer consolation. Soothed by her kindness, he frankly unfolded the history of his love, the recital of which beguiled her of her tears, and, like Desdemona, she could not help wishing "that heaven had made her such a man." She succeeded in allaying the poignancy of his feelings; and, from that time, every little attention which female delicacy and propriety could warrant, she opportunely manifested towards him. His was not an ungrateful heart; but how to make a proper return for such unmerited kindness, he was at a loss to ascertain. He contrasted her conduct with that of his inconstant fair, and he felt, that, as the latter had forfeited all claims to his regard and affection, his amiable comforter was deserving of the transfer of both, could he overlook disparity of age (for she was much his senior) and a mediocrity of external charms. This difficulty, after a short struggle, he managed to surmount; and in "a little month" from this period, the gentle-hearted spinster had the unspeakable delight of seeing, for the first time in her life, that *rara avis*, a lover, laid at her feet!—and that lover, too, a "comely youth," who had given the highest proof of his wisdom and sincerity, by casting away a worthless, inconstant young Venus from his heart, and raising the image of her dear self—the chaste, demure Minerva, that was to be his future guide, instructress, and counsellor—to the vacant throne. What a conquest! Helen's over Paris, Cleopatra's over "the world's great master," hid "their diminished heads" at the glory of hers. And what could have achieved this conquest? What but those charms which she felt conscious of possessing, but which the *gents* had so long, and so cruelly overlooked? She repaired to her glass; and the image that rose smilingly before her, confirmed the flattering tale she had often told her heart—that she was irresistible if



duly appreciated. Daily, profiting by the monitions of her boudoir-adviser, she strove to remedy every little defect; (for even, alas! the most lovely are not without them;) carefully concealing from view all signs of the "sear and yellow leaf;" smiling away those shadows which, lurking in the deepening valleys of the countenance, too eloquently speak of years "not few," nor free from care; and for the sober step, the staid demeanour of one who had ceased to number herself with the giddy flutterers in life's warm spring, assuming the airy lightness, and sprightly vivacity of a damsel in her teens.

Her triumph was complete; and most skilfully did she contrive to retain in her meshes her youthful captive. To his earnest entreaties for an explicit avowal of her feelings towards him, she gave, like the Pythoness of Apollo, equivocal responses, which would, she well divined, by leaving his mind on the trembling balance between hope and fear, stimulate him the more to solicit that boon, which, ere long, she intended most unreservedly to grant. In the meanwhile, golden opportunities of holding sweet intercourse were abundantly afforded them. Apart from love, conversations on literature, of which the youth was a passionate admirer, and alternate readings in some choice author, occupied their time. His sentiments, by the mysterious alchemic spell of love, became hers the moment they were uttered; resting the pinion of her imagination on his, she soared into the regions of sublimity, or dived down into the ocean of mind, where "many a pearl-thought sleeps dark in its coral chamber;" his prejudices she made peculiarly her own; his friends were hers; his enemies she hated with perfect hatred; she saw every thing with his eyes; heard every thing with his ears; felt every thing with his feelings—in short, she was his very echo; his other self. Flattered into self-esteem by these tokens of his influence over her mind, and impressed with a high sense of her virtues and good qualities, he became extremely urgent that the consummation he so devoutly wished, should be no longer delayed; and one evening she made him happy by the full declaration of her affection.

With a rash impatience, more to be attributed to wounded pride and a desire of being revenged on the object of his first love, than a strength of attachment to the lady whose affections he had so recently won, he pressed for the mention of an early day when the nuptials should be solemnised. He was not long kept in suspense; the time was appointed; and by agreement, the parties quitted the scene where they had first met, to make the necessary arrangements for the event. Previously, however, to the betrothed bride's return to her paternal home, she accompanied her lover to the scenes of his nativity. During her short stay there, with a pitiful ostentation, for which no rational apology can be framed, he frequently rode with her past the residence of her who, he believed, had so shamefully swerved from her fidelity, with an intention of inflicting upon her some portion of that pain, which the adoption of another in the place he once held in her affections, had caused him to endure. Alas! he knew not, neither did I, nor any one of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood, then know the real state of the poor girl's mind; we knew not that his conduct was inflicting another deep wound in her already lacerated heart, whose every pulsation still beat true to its first and only cherished love. We believed her to be inconstant, and, therefore, undeserving of commiseration; but we could not approve of the sorry means of retaliation which the foolish young fellow had adopted.

Shortly after his return home, I had a private interview with the infatuated youth; he appeared highly elated on the occasion; but I could perceive the joyousness he assumed was but a temporary wild fire, hovering over the dreary wilderness of his heart, which would vanish when the present causes of excitement ceased to operate, and leave him in tenfold darkness and misery. I ventured to reason with him on the imprudence of the step he was about to take, and alluded to that part of the Astrologer's prediction relating to him, which he seemed ridiculously determined to fulfil, although the first part that foretold the death of the girl he once loved, had

not yet been verified. He started and turned pale ; and after remaining silent for some minutes, he told me the prophecy had never recurred to his mind from the commencement of his present attachment to the very moment of my mention of it ; but he felt convinced, as he had formerly assured me, that the words of the old man were the irreversible decrees of fate, and it was in vain to attempt to resist them ; besides, he was bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and honour to marry the lady who had done so much for him. He then unfolded to me the whole history of his acquaintance with her, the particulars of which I have previously narrated, and the serious nature of the engagement that existed between them. I saw now, there was no other alternative but marriage, unless both parties would voluntarily consent to dissolve the connexion—a circumstance which, however desirable in my friend's case, I soon ascertained, was far from being expected or wished by the lady. I left him with the most gloomy forebodings of his future career ; and the next day they departed : she to the residence of her parents, and he to a situation which he had very recently procured, in a distant town.

The appointed period drew nigh, when the inauspicious union was to be consummated ; but a circumstance occurred in the meantime, which, could it not be proved by the testimony of several highly respectable living witnesses, would be considered by many, as a mere fiction. The subject of this short memoir was sitting, one beautiful starlight evening in the early part of May, by the open casement of his chamber, musing over the events of his past life, and the prospects of the future. While thus engaged, he heard a sudden fluttering noise in the air, and presently a large bird passed over his head, uttering a strange shuddering sound, and flew twice or thrice round the apartment. At last, it rested upon a small image of Cupid, standing on the mantle-piece ; and the astonished youth, having procured a light, gently seized his nocturnal visitant, and found it was a beautiful dove, white as snow, with the exception of a slight ring of changing green, round its neck.

Wondering at the incident, he took his trembling captive into the house of a friend who resided close by ; but the first object that met his eye, on entering the room where the family were assembled, was the wan countenance of his once beloved E\*\*\*\*, who immediately swooned away at his approach, and the dove fell from his hand lifeless on the floor.

I shall make no comments on this strange event ; let those who are skilled in auguries, divine its import. But I have no doubt the reader, by this time, is anxious to know why the fair Invalid quitted her home to reside in the immediate vicinage of her truant lover's abode. I have seen many an enigma in the " Lady's Diary," more difficult to expound than this. Ostensibly, her object was, in accordance with the advice of her physician, to try the effect of a change of air and scene upon her sinking spirits and wasting frame ;—but why not seek a retreat more likely to answer such an object than a cooped-up residence in a densely populated town ? Such a question, reader, hadst thou been acquainted with her heart, had been needless. What to her, now, the most delicious gales that ever breathed, or the most enchanting scenes nature could present ? They could charm her no more, since he, with whose presence she had thought " the wilderness and solitary places looked glad, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose," was no longer the beloved companion of her way. But that place where she was privileged to be near him once more ; to see him as he passed by ; to hear him speak, even though his words were not for her ; had charms she would not have exchanged for the delights of a paradise. Pride in her heart had long since ceased to dwell ; a sublime and holy devotedness of love ; a sweet and beautiful tenderness of feeling, alone resided there ; and, therefore, the haughty air assumed by him whose heart she believed was estranged from her, and the cold, repulsive conduct he manifested towards her, arising from causes which she could not, even if she were willing, remove, were not only overlooked, but kindly forgiven.

A week glided away ; and it was remarked with pleasure by her friends, that a decided improvement was perceptible in their lovely visitor's look and tone of spirits ; and hopes were entertained, that, provided all existing obstacles could be removed, she might even yet recover, and be united to him to whom her conduct gave such unequivocal testimony of being most faithfully attached. The old gentleman, in whose house she was staying, interested himself warmly in her cause. He sought an interview with my friend, (though I believe without either her consent or knowledge,) and endeavoured (and certainly the attempt speaks not very favourably of his notions of honour,) to persuade the latter to break his engagements with the lady he had promised to espouse, and take back to his heart and affections the girl he had once adored ; promising to obtain a plenary consent to their union, as soon as circumstances would permit, from the hitherto unrelenting mother. This proposition, as it was thought to have emanated from a mercenary motive, which the young man's probability of success in his new undertaking had given rise to, was rejected by him with proper disdain ; and the poor girl, in the course of a few days after this unseasonable overture had been made, beheld with emotions no language can depict, busy preparations going on for the reception of the soon-expected bride. This scene became insupportable ; and she requested to be conveyed home without delay. On the morning of her departure, as she was going to the coach-office, accompanied by a female friend, she met, by accident, her alienated lover. She extended her hand to him, which he coldly took ; then with a look and tone that rent his very soul, she tenderly bade him farewell, and feebly walked on with her companion. Never more did these unfortunate beings behold each other in this world.

My poor friend sought his residence, and strove to dispel the agonising feelings which this sad and unexpected meeting had occasioned.—It was in vain :—a terrible suspicion arose in his mind, that she was guiltless of the charge of the violation of

her plighted vow—and that his cruel conduct had accelerated the progress of that malady which was fast hurrying her to the tomb. He resolved, if possible, to atone for his heinous crime. He would follow her home, and lie at her feet, till she pronounced him forgiven. He had been fatally deceived by misrepresentation: she was still sincerely, devotedly his—and though his love for her had slumbered for a time, he felt it still existed in all its tenderness and fervency. But could he with honour, and without insulting the feelings of the lady, break off his present connexion? A few moments' consideration convinced him of the dreadful impossibility; and with the fortitude of a martyr, he calmly resigned himself to the disposal of the evil genius of his destiny, who had pronounced, by the lips of the Astrologer, his inevitable doom.

And now the day arrived from which was to commence the era of his matrimonial existence. Few bridals, perhaps, ever had a more inauspicious commencement. The ceremony was performed by a priest, who gave evident proofs that he had not been present at a temperance festival the preceding evening, and who, during the discharge of his sacred duties, manifested such levity of conduct, and such total disregard to the solemnity of the occasion, as to receive the reproof of the bridegroom himself, when he rose from his knees at the foot of the altar! There was no parade, no joyousness, no revelry. Few, brief, and formal, were the customary salutations; and the married pair quitted the church for their residence in Yorkshire.

Even unions hallowed by the purest affection, and sanctioned by all those favourable circumstances which augur well for their happy continuance, have been characterised with alternations of sunshine and gloom: but this union was overshadowed by the clouds of disappointment and remorse, that grew darker and darker, from its commencement to its tragical close.

Fain would I draw the curtain of oblivion over this portion of my unfortunate friend's history ; but justice to his memory requires that, however painful the task, I should state some of the principal causes that rendered this matrimonial alliance unhappy ; and to do this the more effectually, it will be necessary, before I proceed further, to give a somewhat more extended portraiture than I have hitherto done of the two individuals whom we have seen embarked together on the great voyage of life. From the incidents already related, the reader will form a general estimate of the character of one of the parties ; but there are some particular traits, which, as they were developed only in private life, and discerned by the eye of friendship, should be stated, to enable us to form a more accurate judgment.

At the time of his marriage, my friend was about five and twenty years of age. In the early part of life, his education had been neglected—not because he was not blessed with opportunities of acquiring knowledge, but because those opportunities were rendered abortive, by an unconquerable dislike to the confinement and discipline of a school, and the pernicious indulgence of a kind, but ignorant mother. To him, the tales of Jack the Giant Killer, of witches, and goblins, had infinitely greater charms than the Latin Primer, and the Golden Rule of Three ; and provided he could meet with any one (and many there were ready to gratify him for the sake of the reward,) who could amuse him with stories of this description, he was most happy to forego a forenoon's, or even a whole day's drilling and imprisonment at school, and freely share with him the generally well-stored contents of his basket and bottle. I mention this circumstance merely in corroboration of the statement I made at the commencement of his history, relative to the superstitious bias of his mind, and his fondness for legendary lore. It is but justice to him, however, to state, that, in after periods of his life, he amply atoned, by diligence and attention, for the deficiencies of his early years ; so much so, that, at fifteen, he was reveling in the sweets of classic literature, and stood a successful candidate for the

honours of the bema, and the bays of the Laureate, in an academy, whose conductor was once as well known for his ability and learning, as his pupils for their general proficiency and propriety of conduct. But no mode of mental discipline could ever eradicate those deeply rooted notions my friend had imbibed in his childhood, or qualify him for becoming an active citizen of the world. To the end of his days, he was averse to promiscuous society; and few, indeed, were the visits he paid, and the friendships he formed; but if any one became acquainted with him, and won his esteem, he was frank, cheerful, and obliging. Incapable of meanness, he suspected none in the person who called himself his friend; and, therefore, he most unreservedly made his bosom the depository of all his secrets—an indiscretion for which their betrayal often subjected him to much vexation and trouble—still he trusted, and trusted again, and was again, and again deceived. To this unhappy, but amiable weakness, may be attributed more, perhaps, than to any other failing, a great share of those misfortunes and sorrows, that embittered his short career in life.

Unexcited, he was one of the most commonplace of beings; forbidding in aspect; undignified either in thought or expression;—but roused, his mind threw off her trammels; and the listless individual whom, perhaps, you beheld a few moments before with feelings allied to aversion, you have been surprised to see standing beside you, like an illuminated shrine, from which issued “thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.” Indeed, it may truly be said, that he was only in his proper element, when most aloof from the common concerns of life. In the every-day world, he was a pigmy among the pigmies; but when placed in scenes that appealed by their magnitude, grandeur, and sublimity, to the awakened powerful sympathies of his nature—when the lofty mountains stood around him, covered with snow, like high priests clad in their sacerdotal robes, pleading before God for a guilty race—then it was, that his spirit seemed to expand, like the



liberated form of the Genie of old, into the full stature of its proud intellectuality, uttering spontaneous hymns, that rose to heaven with the chorus of the storm.

Such were some of the principal features in the character of the young bridegroom: those of the lady of his choice, shall now pass in review before us.

Of her personal attractions, I presume not to speak; because I could not eulogise them without flattery, nor disparage them without offence to gallantry. Early in life she devoted her attention to the acquirement of knowledge, and became exceedingly learned in chronology, jurisprudence, and pharmacology; so much so, that her decisions on a disputed date in history, an intricate point of law, or the best means of curing corns, were maintained by the country people among whom she lived, and was regarded as an oracle, against the learning of the parson, the judgment of the lawyer, and the skill of the chiropodist. The Greek language, too, she could read with fluency; but it may be said of her, as of many who have not *her* plea for their ignorance, that she gave it a tongue, but no understanding. Music had no charms for her; and, therefore, she wisely left it to those who had ears to hear, and hearts to feel; she did not, however, disdain to join in the mazy dance; and it must be confessed, few ever tripped on "the light fantastic toe," with more *up-rightness* and precision. The common peccadillos, the amiable weaknesses of her sex, were not observable in her; she was one of those faultless characters, at which admiration grows chill in gazing, as on a marble statue that represents some anomalous abstraction of the mind, rather than the figure of a being, created "a little lower than the angels." Order was her first law; it was visible in all her transactions of business; (for she had often important ones to manage;) in her every act and expression; and woe to the sinner in her "establishment," that broke any of her regulations! Occupying an official situation for many years, she ruled with absolute sway; and by rule she lived, and moved, whether at

home or abroad, in the common affairs of life, or the observances of religion. No food, no physic, passed her lips, that had not the test of experience for its wholesomeness, or the authority of the physician for its use. The rubric of her church she considered as binding as the decalogue; and no Mussulman, or Roman Catholic, was ever more punctilious in observing all the ordinances of his creed, than she in performing all the outward ceremonies of the Church of England. Old men and matrons bade their daughters follow her example in all the duties of life, and their sons seek for wives whose virtues resembled hers; but, however much the young women might profit by this advice, the undutiful youths eschewed it, and wooed damsels whose qualifications were less splendidly conspicuous, and more congenial to their taste. Thus, "alone in her glory," her days rolled on, till she arrived at that epoch in a woman's life, when the probabilities of marriage become exceedingly problematical, without one sincere solicitation for the honour of her love; for, though many giddy girls had lovers, "plentiful as blackberries," clustering around them, none ever bowed a worshipper at the shrine of her charms. But the day of her triumph was at hand. She came to Yorkshire; and so sudden was her conquest, that she might have said with Cæsar, "*Veni, vidi, vici.*" She married; and had she been the woman she appeared to be, the union might, perhaps, have been comparatively happy; but, unfortunately, she brought to her new sphere of duties all the inveteracy of old habits; all the consciousness of long acknowledged superiority; all the formality of established order; all the punctilio of ceremony; all the determined purpose of maintaining prerogative. In whatever way other females might act in regard to their husbands, she would reign absolute; her will should be the law; her husband should be her humble minister. His coming in, and going out, should be regulated by her will; his sayings and doings, by her superior wisdom. Not a friend should be admitted to his table, not a shilling should he spend, without her approbation. But it is time to pause: the reader has already anticipated the result of a union with a being whose qualities were such as I have just enumerated.

Strange as it may seem, for a long time, my friend submitted to female dominancy, in passive obedience, from a belief that a woman of such exemplary virtues as his wife possessed, could have no other motive for her conduct than a desire to promote his interests, and restrain his irregularities. But he found that the more he gave way to the indulgence of her humour, the more arbitrary she became, and the more difficult to please. In bitterness of spirit, he experienced the truth of our great Progenitor's remark to his frail partner, after their fatal lapse,

Thus it shall befall

Him who to worth in woman overtrusting,  
 Lets her will rule : restraint she will not brook ;  
 And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,  
 She first his weak indulgence will accuse.

He saw the egregious folly of his conduct, and determined, for the sake of their mutual happiness, to assert his proper character. The first step he took to accomplish his object, was the assumption of his right to be the keeper of his own purse. This was the signal for domestic war. She resisted ; she stormed ; she raved, in all the phrensy of a female Bacchante ; but he was firm, and effected his purpose, though at the expense of all future comfort and peace. Then it was that her real character began to be developed. All those winning graces which she had assumed, and which had invested her as with a radiant veil, vanished at the touch of the talisman of truth, and she appeared before him like a nameless being of another world. The gentle creature, who, before marriage, would have cried out with Petruchio's bride, " It is the sun, or moon," just as he willed, after she had put on her " wedding shoes," instead of saying with the subdued Kate,

I am ashamed that women are so simple  
 To offer war, where they should sue for peace,  
 Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,  
 Where they are bound to serve, love, and obey,

was transformed into a shrew as furious, untameable, and refractory, as a tigress reft of her young. But she had to deal with a man who, "when the fit was on him," was more than a match for a legion such as she. Her feminine courage quailed for a time before him; and fear extorted confessions of repentance, and promises of amendment, which tomorrow's sun saw scattered to the winds. His heart, however, "had springs that might be won," and soon it "relented towards her," having "her fault acknowledged and deplored." But he had sinned beyond all forgiveness; he had wrenched the sceptre from her grasp, and she was determined to be revenged.

Not long is the tongue of scandal still, when a feud arises between man and wife. Of this rupture, accordingly, reports, which gained momentum and credence from every fresh recital, were soon in busy circulation. In that religious female coterie, in which she was regarded as a mirror of meekness, and a pattern of piety, the "injured wife" was assailed with questions numberless, respecting the treatment she had experienced from her "hard-hearted husband." An eloquent flood of tears, and a prayer sobbed out most piteously to the throne of Divine grace, for the forgiveness of those "who had trespassed against her," were irresistible confirmations of the worst "facts" that had been told.

Darkness gathered around the name of my unfortunate friend; and the few that had sought his acquaintance, apprehensive, I suppose, of some stain upon their characters, if they were known to associate with him, ceased, by degrees, to visit his abode, and began to shun his society. Among the good wives and spinsters, he was looked upon as a sort of monster; and closely did they gather their robes about them when they chanced to meet him in the street, lest they should be contaminated even by the touch of the hem of his garment. Those of his own sex, who had passively submitted to the governance of their "better halves," however

much they might secretly approve of his courage in asserting his rights, felt it both their duty and interest to re-echo the charge which had been preferred against him in the female judicatory, and which proclaimed him guilty of high treason against the sovereign dignity of wifehood! All this, however, he philosophically bore, the "*mens conscia recti*" being more than a sufficient recompense for the loss of ephemeral friendships and popular good will; but at home, peace and comfort were things unknown; and his heart grew sad, and preyed upon its own grief, with none to pity and to soothe. If he sought the solitude of his chamber, in hopes to find a short respite from his troubles, by communing with the spirits of the past, the voice of complaining soon rung in his ears like a knell, and forced him to seek an asylum elsewhere. All that could annoy; all that could chafe and mortify his proud spirit, was ingeniously contrived to be done by his wayward Xantippe. The lowliness of his birth became a theme of reproach; and the inadequacy of his income to support the claims of worldly respectability, a cause of unceasing complaint. His attachment to books, his literary achievements, once the subjects of her professed regard and admiration, she now denounced as incompatible with the comforts of married life—as absurd and contemptible.

I believe, however heterodox the opinion, there is no medium in woman; she is either an angel or a fiend; but I would charitably hope, for the honour of humanity, that those of the sex who merit the latter appellation, are but rarely to be found. It is evident, however, that my friend might have claimed the exception to the general rule in the person of his wife; to him, though elsewhere, the meekest of the meek, the most pious of the pious, she was not a ministering angel, in that sphere, where her virtues ought most to have been exemplified and felt—in the little world of duties at home. To strip off this meretricious veil, and exhibit her in her true character, would have been, even if he could have overcome the inveterate pre-

judices she had raised against him, a sorry triumph ; he, therefore, suffered her to pass before the eyes of the world in her "most virtuous seeming," without attempting her exposure, or his own vindication.

In the midst of his domestic troubles, intelligence reached him that poor E\*\*\*\* was no more. This event, though long expected, gave a shock to his mind from which it never afterwards recovered. He now felt he had lost the only being on whose faithfulness and affection he could rely, and abandoned himself to the darkest despair.

By whatever motives actuated, I know not, the mother of the deceased invited him to attend the funeral ! Gentle reader, ought he, in his then circumstances to have gone ? Perhaps not : but he was too much a creature of feeling, and had too long experienced the world's bitter contumely and oppression, to regard its common conventionalities ; he *felt* it was his duty to follow to the grave the remains of that being whom he had deeply, yet unintentionally, wronged, and whose love for him had ceased but with life itself. He went ; and well do I remember his ghastly, haggard countenance, his appalling look, as he bent half way over the grave, and gazed upon the lowered coffin, during the performance of the solemn ritual over the dead. Tears were shed by the relatives and friends who stood around ; the young man, too, who had striven to supplant him in the affections of his E\*\*\*\*, was there ; and he wept bitterly ; but, alas ! for my wretched friend ! he could not shed a tear ; in frozen agony he remained till the first shovelful of earth fell on the coffin-lid ; then he suddenly started up, and, casting a withering glance at the mother who stood at the head of the grave, he rushed like a maniac from the churchyard.

Little remains now to be told. Once more shrouded in his solitude, my friend continued to pass through the ordeal of domestic cares. Occasionally, however, he

emerged ; and when warmed with a genial glass, in the company of the merry-hearted, he for a time, forgot his sorrows, and became the gayest of the gay ; but bitterly did he pay for this temporary exhilaration, when his "soul shrunk back upon herself," in the silent depths of her despair. It was after enjoying one of these sunshiny moments, at some distance from home, that, on his return, he lost his way, and was never heard of more. A body, it is true, was, about three months afterwards, found in the river, six miles below the bridge over which he had to cross ; but neither the stature, countenance, nor garb, corresponded to that of my lamented friend. Suffice it :—"after life's fitful fever, he sleeps well ;" and over the heart of that woman, who once trifled with his happiness, and blighted his name, repentance, like the simoom, has passed ; and I will not add to her anguish and remorse by giving vent to a feeling of reproach. Her, and the old star-diviner, who still lives to make dupes of the credulous, I leave in the hands of that Being, "who trieth the heart."

No remarks of mine shall anticipate the reflections which this sad story will naturally excite in the reader's mind. It had been easy to have been more explicit, more minute in detail ; and, perhaps, justice to the dead required this at my hands ; but I was apprehensive, lest, by a too faithful narration of events, the verisimilitude to the experience of persons now living, might become glaringly manifest, and cruel curiosity be induced to pry into the arcana of sorrows already too heavy to be borne, and "prate of their whereabouts" to an unfeeling world. All that I intended has been accomplished, if the reader is induced to believe that

"Black's not so black, nor white so very white,"

in the two characters introduced to his notice, as malignity on the one hand would depict, and hoodwinked partiality represent on the other ; and that, in regard to Astrology, he is ready to exclaim with Edmund, in Shakspeare's tragedy of King Lear, "This is the excellent foppery of the world ! that, when we are sick in fortune,

(often from the surfeit of our own behaviour,) we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon, and the stars : as if we were villains by necessity ; fools, by heavenly compulsion ; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance ; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence ; and all that we are evil in, by divine thrusting on."

## PAGE 89.

(8) Never, when first, beneath a LEYLAND'S wand, &c.

Halifax, already distinguished by great native talent, has now to boast of a Sculptor, who has more than realized, by one production of his genius, the most exquisite conception in Hogg's poetry. Loveliness was never the attribute of woman, if it breathes not divinely in Leyland's Kilmeny.

## PAGE 106.

(9) On the calm deep the planet lingers still,  
In wonted glory o'er yonder castled hill.

On the wild and highly picturesque summit which crowns Rawtonstall Wood, in the township of Stansfield, are the remains, that is, the foundations, of a tower of considerable dimensions, and this rocky mount yet bears the name of Castle Hill. The hill is a natural eminence strengthened by art, and was probably first used as a fortification by the Saxons. The view from this point is truly magnificent, and will well repay the labour, although not slight, of ascending the mountain. About a century since there was a house a little below the site of the fort, said to have been surrounded by a moat, but no vestige of either the house or the moat can now



be seen. A field situated immediately below some cottages called Tom's-i'th-Wood, still retains the name of the Castle Hall Field, where the old Manor House undoubtedly stood. It has probably belonged to the Stansfield family, and it appears to have borne much the same relation to the tower before-mentioned, as the Castle Hall of Mirfield to the noble earthen fort which adjoins it.

## PAGE 113.

(10) Upon his hair, last eve so dark, the snows  
Of eld have prematurely fallen!

A young friend of mine, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, had his hair changed by the influence of excessive grief, in the space of six hours, from a dark auburn to a silver grey. Lord Byron, in the opening lines of his *Prisoner of Chillon*, represents the captive as saying,

“ My hair is grey, but not with years,

Nor grew it white

In a single night,

As men's have grown from sudden fears.”

His *Manfred*, too, in his sublime soliloquy upon the cliffs of the *Jungfrau*, utters these words :

“ To be thus—

Grey-haired with anguish, like these blasted pines,

Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,” &c.

To which is appended the following note :—

Speaking of *Marie Antoinette*, “ I was struck,” says *Madame Campan*, “ with the astonishing change misfortune had wrought upon her features : her whole head

of hair had turned almost white, during her transit from Varennes to Paris." The same thing occurred to the unfortunate Queen Mary. "With calm but undaunted fortitude," says her historian, "she laid her neck upon the block; and while one executioner held her hands, the other, at the second stroke cut off her head, which, falling out of its attire, discovered her hair, already grown quite grey with cares and sorrows." The hair of Mary's grandson, Charles I, turned quite grey in like manner, during his stay at Carisbrooke. *Byron's Works*, vol. 11, p. 22.

### PAGE 113.

(11) And Kirklees' hallowed sanctuary, where  
Rapt lips breathe orisons on the midnight air, &c.

To the pen of Mr. Francis A. Leyland, I am indebted for the subjoined account of the ancient Priory of Kirklees:—

Kirklees Priory stood in a beautiful and retired situation on the banks of a rivulet, called Nun-Brook, in the Parish of Mirfield, near Halifax. Kirklees Priory was founded by Reynerus Flandrensis, in the reign of King Henry the Second, for Cistercian Nuns, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. James. The list of endowments to this Priory may be found in the appendix to Dugdale's *Monasticon*. The following is a list of as many names of the Prioresses as have occurred, and may, perhaps, be interesting.

Elizabeth de Staynton is the first that we find mentioned; she was Prioress sometime in the thirteenth century; her tomb may still be seen, though in a dilapidated condition; it is surrounded by lofty and noble beeches, whose pensive

shadows subdue and sanctify the light, producing in the mind of the beholder, those hallowed reflections, which soften the afflictions of life ; and, at the same time, fortify the heart. On her tomb is the following beautiful and affectionate inscription in old French, now almost unintelligible :—

**“ Douce Jhesu de Nazareth fites mercy a Elizabeth de Staynton jadis Prioress de cest Maison.”**

It has been in part restored, and an outer stone border added, on which is the above inscription in English : “ *Sweet Jesus of Nazareth, grant mercy to Elizabeth de Staynton, late Prioress of this house.*” At the foot of this tomb, is another of smaller dimensions, without any inscription ; probably the resting place of her beloved sister “in the flesh as well as in the spirit.”

Margaret de Claysworth, confirmed 4 Kal. Oct. 1306.

Alicia de Screvyn, confirmed 4th Ides, Jan. 1307.

Cecilia Hill ; on whose death

Joanna Stansfield was elected, in the year 1491 ; on whose death

Margaret de Tarlton was elected, and confirmed in her office, April 24, 1499.

Margaret Fletcher was confirmed, March 10, 1505.

Cecilia Hopecliffe was confirmed as Abbess, July 9, 1527 ; on whose death

Joan Keps was elected : she resigned her Abbey to the Visitors of the Religious Houses, on the 4th of Nov. 1540. She retired to Mirfield, where she died and was buried. Soon after her death, an inscription, commemorative of her burial, was engraven round an arch in the choir of the church ; it had probably been copied from the following entry in the parish register :—

**“ Dame Joan Kepasst, late nunc of Kirklees, was buried  
ye first day of February, Anno dni. 1562.”**

The church has been restored in a truly *gothic* style ; yet the stones which contained the above inscription, have been most carefully and tastefully preserved within

the sanctuary railing : unfortunately, however, they are so disposed as to remind one more of the entrance to a coal cellar, or henroost, than a preserved specimen of antiquity. At the dissolution, there were four nuns surviving: Isabel Hopton, Agnes Brooke, Isabel Rooles or Rodes, and Isabel Satterstall. The Abbess, Joan Keps, had assigned to her the paltry pension of £2; and the Nuns had each the sum of £1 13s 4d allotted to them. In the reign of King Henry the VIII, the house was granted, probably for a term of years, to John Jasburgh and Nicholas Savile; and in the reign of Edward the VI, it was granted to the Ramsdens; afterwards it came into the possession of the Armytage family, as appears by the Mon: Ang: in the 8th of Elizabeth, by purchase from Robert Pilkinton, and has continued in the same family to the present day. This poor, though far-famed priory, must have been a very stately one in its most flourishing time, as is evident from the extent of the buildings with which its former site is now covered. The church, comprising chancel and nave, measured about 150 feet, and was a very noble building; but it has been destroyed, and a barn erected on the ground which it occupied. Immediately above, and divided from the barn by a wooden gateway, are the remains of a building, against whose north wall stands a buttress, evidently of great antiquity. Here, I have no doubt, has terminated the west end of the north aisle of the church. In the 17th century, there was a turreted gateway remaining, as appears from an engraving of the Priory in Dr. Stukeley's Itinerary; but it has also shared the fate of the church; and there is not one stone left to mark the place where it stood. On the south, and approaching towards the rivulet, may be easily traced from the unevenness of the ground, the quadrangle of the cloister-court, which, from its extent, must have been equal to many of the richer Cistercian houses. Westward of the Priory, are the remains of a building closely surrounded by trees, wearing a gloomy aspect, and of very ancient appearance; it is three stories high; and the rooms are extremely low; the windows are divided into lights by munnions, and each light, being not more than four inches wide, by about two

feet long, gives the rooms that "dim religious light," so peculiar to the cloister. This building is not mentioned by Whitaker, or any other antiquary with whom I am acquainted; but I have reason to believe, that it was set apart, as was usual in religious houses, for the residence of the superior. It is situated about a hundred yards from the Priory, and it is painful to observe the ruinous condition into which it is at present falling, after having been used for many years as a malt-kiln, or some other execrable purpose. But it is gratifying to the poet and the antiquary to be enabled, after a lapse of nearly three centuries, to find yet remaining that portion of the Priory, in which Robin Hood, the outlaw, expired; and to that circumstance alone may be ascribed its preservation from the destruction which befell the house, after it had passed into the hands of individuals, in whom every better feeling had given way to those of sordid interest, or of wanton and reckless extravagance. It is impossible to close these observations without contrasting the former with the present appearance of the Priory. To the renovating eye of the contemplative wanderer, it is presented in all its former magnificence; the church with its chancel, nave and aisles; its transepts and low monastic tower, built in the rich style of the thirteenth century, and its interior adorned with all that art could lavish upon it; lamps burning with undiminished splendour, day and night, before the Host and the shrines of saints; the waving of thuribles and wafting of incense, together with the sweet and solemn music of Complin, Lauds or Even-song. And there are likewise presented to the mind's eye, other scenes of a different nature; the night watches, and nuns prostrated before the altars, chanting, in melodious accents, the prayers of their church; or when not engaged in sacred duties, according to their discipline, pacing in their white habits to and fro in the cloister-walk, in silent contemplation. Such were Kirklees Priory and its inmates, during an uninterrupted sabbath of three hundred years; but in after times, how changed the scene! Instead of hymns and canticles, the baying of bandogs, the snarling of curs, and the howling of some scores of famished hounds, mingled with the heedless

curses of numberless grooms and gamekeepers, might be heard, and the wheelwright's hammer pealing above every other sound. To this confusion may be added the cries of animals in the slaughter-house, which stood on ground once occupied by a portion of the church! But, in consequence of domestic affliction, the quiet and holy serenity of Kirklees have been, in some degree, restored, and those long continued acts of desecration have at length ceased; and it is the wish of every individual who duly appreciates those interesting memorials of purer and better days, that such disgraceful and outrageous scenes may never be witnessed there again. From the young heir of this estate, better things are expected; it is to him that the lovers of ecclesiastical antiquities look for the preservation of the little that remains of the once stately and far-famed Priory of Kirklees.

## PAGE 118.

(12) Dread sight, from out the north, whose swarthy brow,

“In the year 1574, November 14th, strange impressions of fire and smoke were seen proceeding forth of a black cloud, at midnight, from the north, and so continued till day.” Stow, *ad annum* 1574, Mr. Howe's Edit. p. 679.

## PAGE 120.

(13) An earthquake is abroad, &c.

“The tenets of the Babylonians,” says Pliny, “hold, that earthquakes are caused by the influence of comets, but especially of those that are the precursors of thunder.” Lib. 2, cap. 79.

## PAGE 120.

- (14) Like a strong steed by ruin-fiend bestrode, &c.

Kepler fancied the earth to be an animal, sometimes sweating, sometimes shaking, by the impressions and commotions of the ambient ether, as may be seen in his account of May and August, 1621 and 1629.

## PAGE 123.

- (15) They climbed the beetling cliff, above the one  
Where the wild Watcher sate, &c.

The stance of the wild Watcher, is a perpendicular rock, which projects from the side of Oswald, resembling, at a distance, a circular tower. The view of it from the cliffs above, with its storm-whitened summit, and the yawning depths over which it frowns, is truly sublime.

## PAGE 123.

- (16) Rode on a headless steed along the sky.

Many of the inhabitants of Hebden Bridge and its neighbourhood, will recollect the story of Old Mayroyd, whose ghost is said to appear every Christmas morn, long before day, riding upon a white horse, without a head, up and down the valley of Caldene. When a boy, I remember rising at the stated hour of his peregrinations to gain a sight of him; but the weather was so exceedingly cold and boisterous, I

conjectured, that, as I saw nothing, the old gentleman preferred to remain in his unknown seclusion, rather than endanger his ghostly health, by mounting his phantom-steed at so inclement a season.

I think it necessary to remark here, that the singular being, with whose mysterious disappearance the Poem closes, is not an ideal personage—at least, as regards external characteristics: the prototype is still in existence. There are few persons who have resided long in Caldene, that will not remember the Wild Man of the Wood. He was a maniac; but perfectly harmless, unless exasperated. When roused, however, as on some occasions I have seen him, by the jocular and unfeeling, his rage was terrible; and it frequently required the exertions of three or four strong men, to prevent him from injuring his mischievous tormentor, and to force him down, until, by some means or other, they could inflict a slight wound upon his person, in order to draw blood, at the sight of which he became immediately pacified.

In stature, he was rather below the middle size; but his frame was exceedingly muscular, and his strength enormous. With the exception of a few unintelligible words, which he used as appellatives to his kindred, and, what is strange enough, one or two oaths, when in a state either of angry or pleasurable excitement, nature had denied him the use of speech. He almost invariably wore a cap like the one described in the Poem; and the rolling of his large grey eyes; the strange configuration of his nose; the perpetual movement of his lower jaw; the unnatural length of his brawny arms; and the peculiarity of his gait, were such, that, had a stranger met him alone in any of the rocky solitudes where he was accustomed to wander, he would have been ready to consider him the *genius loci*, and have regarded him with emotions of fear.



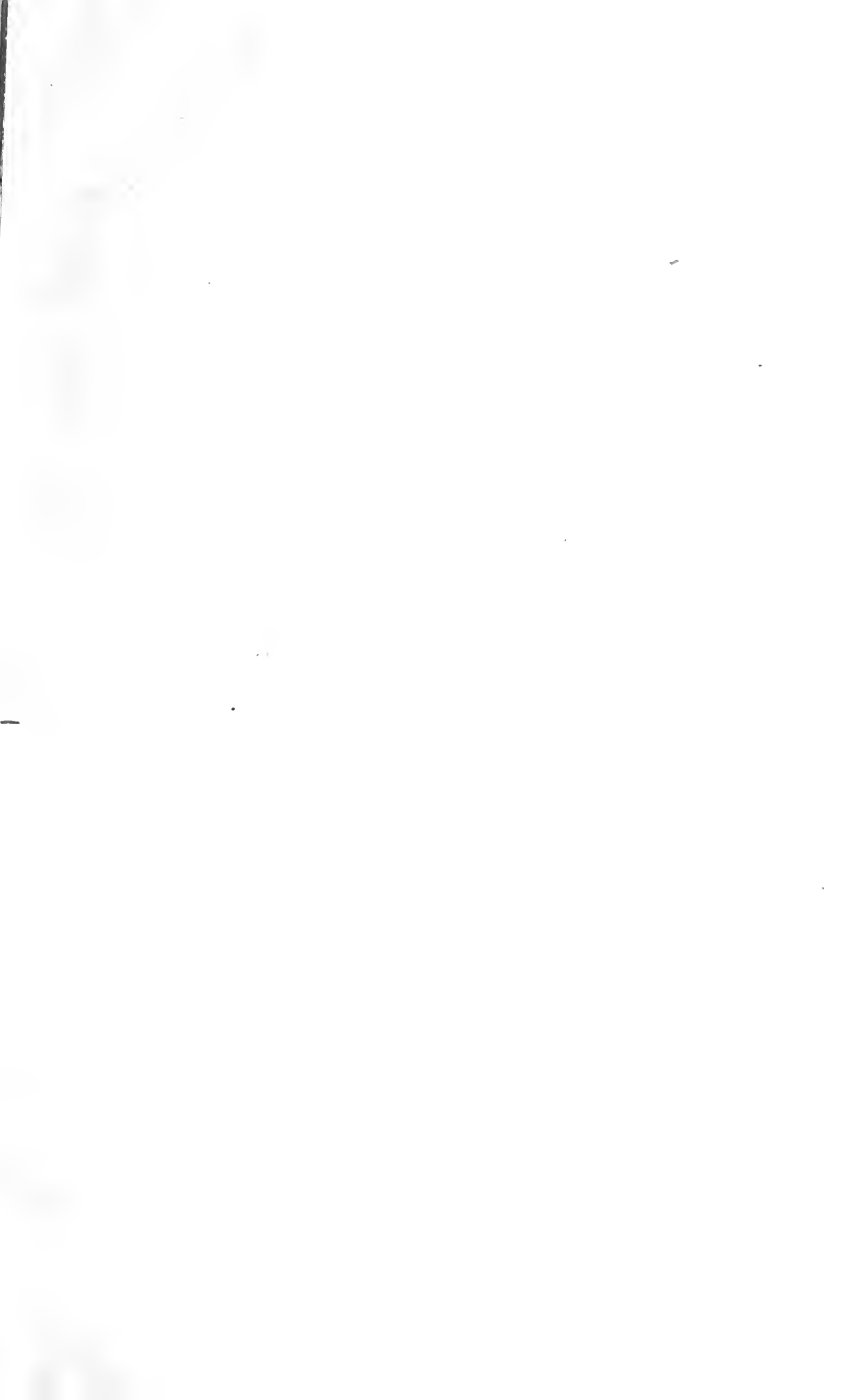
Such was the Wild Man of the Wood, the last time I saw him, which was, I believe, in the year 1820. At a place which is generally known by the name of Burnt Acres, about two miles west of Hebden Bridge, this poor maniac, a few years ago, killed his brother. The melancholy circumstance happened at the commencement of the shooting season on the moors. The Wild Man, who was delighted with the report of a gun, several times during the day attempted to lay aside his work, (which was that of hodman or server to the masons,) and escape to the heathery hills, whence he heard the sounds so charming to his ears; but was prevented by his brother, who kept a strict watch upon his conduct. Towards evening, however, unable any longer to brook restraint, he ran away from his employment, in the direction of the moors, and was pursued by his brother, who, being the swifter footed of the two, was upon the point of coming up with the fugitive, when the latter, suddenly turning round, took up a stone from the road, and throwing it with all his force, struck his pursuer on the temples, and killed him in an instant. At the sight of his brother's streaming blood, his rage subsided. He gazed for a moment, with wondering astonishment, upon the corpse; then took it up in his arms, and reared it against a wall, exclaiming in tones of the most agonising tenderness, "Dulloo! Dulloo!" the name which he always applied to the deceased.

He was for some time confined in York Castle, where a friend of mine, at my request, gained permission to see him, and presented him with a quantity of tobacco; at the sight of which, he manifested signs of the most extravagant joy, hugging it to his bosom, as a miser would the gift of some unexpected treasure. He is now, I understand, in some Asylum in London, where he must remain for life.

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